# Presidential Elections in Latin America: The Ascent of the Left

# Presidential Elections in Latin America: The Ascent of the Left

Ignacio Medina Núñez

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# INDEX

**Prologue** **9**

**Introduction** **15**

**Chapter I**
**Dissolution of Ideological Borders or Ideological Confrontation?** **19**
Right and Left: Border Dissolution 19
Permanence of the Ideological Confrontation 24
In a pluralistic world 27

**Chapter II**
**Utopia and New Social Imaginary** **31**
Rationality and Utopia 32
The social Imaginary 43
From reality to utopia in Latin America 46

**Chapter III**
**Right and Left in Latin America** **51**
A Plural Scenario 51

**Chapter IV**
**Towards the Right** **61**
4.1. COLOMBIA: tough hand's reelection 61
4.2. MÉXICO: rise of the Left but the triumph of the Right 66

**Chapter V**
**Ideological Center Positions** **83**
5.1. HONDURAS: continuation of the Bipartisan System 85
5.2. COSTA RICA: surmounting the Bipartisan System 88
5.3. PERÚ: Second chance for the APRA 92

**Chapter VI**
**An Heterogeneous Left in Ascent** **97**
6.1. BOLIVIA: a surprising democratic revolution of indigenous characteristics 98
6.2. CHILE 2006: continuance of the Pact among many different political forces (the "*Concertación*") 104
6.3. BRAZIL: the reelection of Lula 110
6.4. ECUADOR: Overcoming a Restricted Democracy 137
6.5. NICARAGUA: The Return of the Sandinista Movement 155
6.6. VENEZUELA: the New *Bolivarian* Project 180

**Chapter VII**
**The Center-Left in 2007:Guatemala and Argentina** **211**
7.1. GUATEMALA: Transition to Social Democracy? 211
7.2. ARGENTINA: the Continuity of a Political Project (Nestor-Cristina) 230

**Conclusions** **255**

**Bibliography** **261**

# PROLOGUE

The present book is very opportune. It gives detailed account of the main changes occurred in the politics of Latin America in recent years. It carries out a penetrating theoretical discussion on the origin, development and relevance of the right-left dichotomy, which is reused in a new way to analyze what happens in the main Latin-American countries that have experienced electoral processes between 2005 and 2007. Another merit is that, for each country, a social and historic context is offered, with different discussed interpretations about what there may occur.

The Latinobarómetro data in 2008 show that, despite two of each ten latin-Americans that do not know or they do not want to respond if they are in the left or in the right, and that four of each ten would prefer to be identified with an indeterminate political center, they persist who want to be recognized as rightist or leftist. From 1998 to 2008, the ones that confess being rightists have descended 14 points (from a 36 to 22 percent). The ones that proclaim being lesftists have descended also five points (from 22 to 17%). Nevertheless, there are fundamental themes with significant proportions that approach a great majority to be a part of the left. In this way, questioning about what activities should be mainly in the hands of the State and not in the private enterprises the answers are forceful: 8 of each ten they prefer that the State control education (from basic to the university level), health, drinking water, pensions and retirements, electric services and petroleum.[1]

This book explains why Latin-American landslide has gone toward the left. The fight against the predators and terrible measures of the neoliberal globalization has pushed a large number of people to the left. But the book does not fall in simplification because it shows that there are many and very diverse lefts. There are leftists political parties and social movements that

[1] Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2008*, Santiago de Chile. www.latinoabrometro.org

prompt demands that can only be responded by the left. There is a convergence between these two institutionalizations, but also deceptions, conflicts and breakings. There is one left wanting the power of the State and to make the social changes from above, and there is another left proposing to make the social changes from below and without having the power of the State. In the left, they are presented as much moderates as radicals. Although these last they are not necessarily those that shout stronger, but who know how "to build lines of deep break".[2] Besides the internal differences of the left, the fights for which would be proclaimed "a legitimate left" are given in the condemnations established among the diverse groups. There are those who accuse the other remaining in a reformist left. The Bolivian Oscar Oliveira, who has maintained himself in the fight from below, has accused the government of Evo Morales of breaking the demands about going back in the privatization process and continuing with repression. He complains that a government can say that his old companion fighters in trench should be called "an extreme left" financed by the right in order to destabilize the government, when the reality is that the left is trying to maintain the fight and demands of the poor people. In this way, some people have thought that getting to the government "is useless", because it remains obedient to the factual powers, and because the power consumes not only the institutions but the people, and because it turns out to be insufficient to nationalize what has been expropriated as public patrimony if it does not arrive to the social appropriation, and to the exercise of the decision about what is social and public matter.[3]

There is a left that privileges the electoral fight; another left that wants to combine the electoral and the social struggle, and another one that no longer trusts in what can be done by governments earned by votes. Various groups of this great range of the left present the key to know if there truly is a left or not when there is an anti-capitalist goal. The Italian left in 2008 was practically erased during the electoral setting. This prompted to some groups of the left to the need of constituing a new anti-capitalist left being set apart of the old leading groups responsible for the electoral failure. They speak not about reconstruction but about a construction with new bases. They want to be placed in the social opposition in order to build an

[2] Raúl Arancibia, "La izquierda a debate" in *La Fogata Digital*, www.lafogata.org (page consulted December 19, 2008).

[3] These are words of Oscar Olivera from a reflexion group on social movements in Guadalajara. December 2, 2008.

extensive resistance. They say that a new left should be thought being anti-capitalist, ecologist and feminist. They insist that the absolute democracy should be the practice to begin again; therefore the charismatic leaders or the infallible leading groups cannot be trusted. They demand the rigorous rotation of charges at all levels. They are conscious that this kind of left cannot be prompted but in the breast of the contradictions of social conflicts and not in the meetings of parlors. They know that the new subject is not born during a sefldeclaration but in the construction of a movement. The themes of their fight should be going against the precariousness, for the employment properly paid, for the ecological defense, against the large harmful and useless works, for the self-determination, women's rights, etc.[4]

The left oscillates among adjustments to the prevailing situation and purist sectarianisms.[5] There are who do not recommend accumulating defeats because this finishes in demobilizing and discouraging people. Also, the false expectations eventually are demobilizing. One must show that the fight "pay", because victories are obtained, because injustices are not only denounced but also they are stoped. Also it is important that one must be careful that the social fights are not recovered for the power. Among those who insist that the left should show that its fight is truly anti-capitalist, there are sectors that do not want to abandon the electoral field. It is said that in the anti-capitalist left is possible to build capacities to compete with the reformist left, but also it is said that it is required that the left with parliamentary representation should be amplified with critical speech so that the social fights can be supported in the areas the traditional left has abandoned.[6] When we see the boom of the left in Latin America we recommended not to forget that by the electoral way the right can return. Against those who maintain that we should change the world without taking the power, it is necessary to emphasize the impossibility of eluding the state action, because the sate has a great influence in front of the popular demands.[7] Nevertheless, others emphasize that there are many invalid elements in the old left

[4] Some authors: "Once puntos para una nueva izquierda anticapitalista y de clase", in *Viento Sur*, num. 98, July 2008, p. 12-15.

[5] Alex Callinicos: "¿Hacia dónde va la izquierda radical?" in *International Socialism*, November 28, 2008.

[6] Andreu Coll, "Lucha de clases, izquierda anticapitalista y partido revolucionario en Europa", in www.espacioalternativo.org February 27, 2007.

[7] Claudio Katz, *Las disyuntivas de la izquierda en América Latina*, Ediciones Luxemburgo, Buenos Aires, 2008.

and that we all would have to seek new forms of organization and strategy that privilege an autonomous politics.[8]

Autonomy is a key item of the new left. It is a matter of building institutional but above all vital conditions for a selfacting framework. There are many accumulated mistakes. Suddenly they sprout extensive movements that question the prevailing order. For example, in Chile, in the middle of 2006, high schools students occupied lyceums, and they made crowded manifestarions against the neoliberal politics and demanded for a public education of quality. By the end of 2008, in Greece, the students showed the serious social crisis of neoliberal managements. They said: "we are the generation of the 400 euro, of the *stage* programs of the agency of employment, of the flexible work, of the eternal training always at our expenses, of the precariousness, of the scarcity, of the two titles that are no use at all, of the elimination of the labor rights, humiliated by our bosses… we are the boys and girls that many humiliate… we are the injured in the marches… we will die soon because we were against the laws that are stealing our lifes… we are many and we are furious… we have not illusions, we have no hopes".[9] These groups are tired of the politicians in all the electoral stages and they seek other forms to be defended and to do politics. Obviously, they are another type of left. The left cannot be reduced to the political parties neither to the organizations that proclaimed themselves as the left, but it is expanded to whom they resist and they rebel against under the capitalist conditions. In this new left, is a matter of making the decisions from below; small autonomous spaces are created and a new political order becomes the everyday routine. It is a matter of not depending on specific times (specially electoral times) neither on the rhythms of the powerful, but to have the control of one's own life. More than facing directly the State and capital, they remove spaces with alternative practices. The problem is how to articulate this great diversity of experiences as a capable critical mass to push a substantial change. As Houtart exposed it before the UN, speaking about the serious financial, food, energy, climatic and social crises, the world requires alternatives. He proposed another definition of economy privileging the value of use instead of the value of change. An important point is the generalization of a democracy not only applied to the political sector but inside

[8] Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Más allá de la vieja izquierda. Seis ensayos para un nuevo anticapitalismo*, Prometeo, Buenos Aires 2007.

[9] Flyer on the streets in certain greek cities. December 15, 2008.

the economic system and in all the institutions. Houtart defended that the historical actor bearing alternative projects is plural (working people, rural, native towns, women, poor of the cities, militant ecologists, migrants, etc.). He emphasized the need of the human kind to find again a space of life, and therefore to reconstruct hope.[10] All these perspectives have to do with the new left. Maintaining that the distinction between left and right was still operating, Bobbio stated that, in the 20th Century, the right had defended the liberty and the left an equality that has privileged the authoritarianism (Bobbio 1995). Really, the right has defended the liberty for the market that produce poverty and inequalities, but the new left of the 21st Century has to seek the combination of the liberty of mankind with the search of an equality that implies the political, civil democracy, especially the social one, keeping in mind, besides, the extension of democracy to ecology and culture. One must combine liberty with equality, and rescue a deep solidarity, which cannot be achieved in the limits of the capitalism. The left, to be authentic, should contribute to the construction of other more humane worlds.

Dr. Jorge Alonso Sánchez
*jalonso@ciesas.edu.mx*

[10] Words of François Houtart during the Panel about the financial crisis, in the ONU General Assambly. Crisis Financiera, en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. October 30, 2008.

# Introduction

*"The problem is that the rich have taken for themselves the earth and they do not let the rest of the population live".*
(José Profirio Miranda, 1988: 49)

Does it still exist a left and a right in the field of political ideology? Frequently, between diverse citizens and opinion leaders they respond with a NO. The concept of left and political right in many of its contents seems to have lost its sense. On this, for example, Pasquino claims this distinction for the world of modern democracy, indicating an important current of opinions in the political environment: "It is known that for some the distinction is irrelevant: in the contemporary politics, there no longer exists neither a right nor a left. It is the position of those who do not believe that politics can be capable to offer opportunities of significant elections among programmatic alternatives" (Pasquino, 2004). In his turn, Anthony Giddens (1999), with his proposal of the "third way", wanted to surpass the traditional dichotomy between the left and the right, referring so much to the deficiencies of the traditional social democracy of the 20th century as to the neoliberal model at the end of the same century.

Nevertheless, many political parties and groups identified with the left and right, especially during electoral times, they continue bottling in fights and confrontating positions battles under this perspective. Bobbio claims the distinction, wanting to recover the political meaning of the difference, and arrives even to mention that "left and right are terms that the political language has come adopting along the 19th century to our days, in order to represent the troubled universe of politics" (Bobbio, 1995, chapter 2), while Gómez Barata affirms that "the use of the terms right and left is a great resource in order to locate and indentify conveniently the actors of the political process" (Gómez B., 2007). The answer then to the initial question is

not very clear: it can be answered with a "Yes" with sufficient practical and theoretical reasons, and it can be answered with a "No" due to the ideological landslide of both tendencies toward a political center.

In Latin America, besides, there is a new phenomenon: after the phase of the multiple military and dictatorial governments we reached a democratic transition understood only with the elections execution perspective, with civil governments, which mostly they implemented measures according to the neoliberal economic model; in this way it can be spoken, on one hand, of a fragile democratization, of a "restricted democracy" using the concept of Agustín Cueva, of a "precarious democracy" as it is indicated by Jorge Alonso for the case of México and the State of Jalisco, because we are barely beginning to consolidate the rules of electoral operation with a minimum transparency and, on the other hand, one must reference always to a situation where they change the political elites without changing at all the uneven economic model of capitalism and the wild globalization. "In Latin America we had one of the most important democratizing waves of the last journey of the 20th century. Most of the nations of the subcontinent they suffered authoritarian and dictatorial states that were eroding and exhausting themselves to give rise to political processes that implied a greater liberalization and democratization in the life of societies" (Tejeda, 2005: 93). Nevertheless, under the same rules of the electoral democracy, in the transition to the 21st century, diverse leftist ideologies have arrived at the power of diverse governments, especially in South America. The discussion between the left and right has intensified again, having not only a setting of ideological discussion but specially the proposal of new alternatives to the dominant economic model and even with the imaginary of a socialism for the 21st century, as proposed by Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. With this wave of a left in ascent not only in the electoral environment but also in the social movements, we can utilize what Robinson Salazar (2005) has called the "emancipatory democracy", understanding that it is necessary to deepen the concept of institutional mechanisms established to set new paths of social politics in order to fight poverty and inequality and even to present alternative options against capitalism and to the dominant model. If democracy and the left can be presented as a true options for the diverse nations, one must not forget, beyond the ideological definitions, which one is the main problem to fight, like Porfirio Miranda, one of the great professors I have had in my life and whose words are cited in the epigraph of this introduction, once indicated: the true problem is poverty

and the inequality among human beings; to fight them with efficacy is a possible task in this world.

No longer this rise of the left in our region can be denied, although it's meaning is object of a number of problematics: "this tide of left that seems to be traveling through the American nations to the south of the Río Grande has raised much controversies with old and a new flavor that began at the question whether or not politics can be seen as good, evil, where are politics going, how are they sustainable and how this tide seems or differentiates itself from the left or the populism of past times" (Tussie and Heidrich, in Castañeda 2008).

This book begins undertaking the ideological and historic discussion about the right and left in politics while trying to show a discussion supported both in favor and against such dichotomy. Our position is in favor of continuing maintaining the analytic and conceptual distinction but with certain fundamental conditions, keeping in mind above all a great plurality in the existing left. The theme of the new social imaginary is undertaken because it has arisen in the subcontinent, wanting to show the cultural change that is occurring when the people is not afraid anymore to imagine a new world and to fight so that the world can be otherwise. Subsequently, the particular Latin-American electoral setting is undertaken, especially emphasizing those countries whose presidential elections took place during 2006 and 2007, where diverse governments obtained their victories showing an innovative politics and post-neoliberal ideologies with a social imaginary alternative for the region. In this 2012 English version, we only added some commentaries about more political changes occurred during the last years. It can be told clearly that in Latin America, "the elections in the region continue being a motor of change" (Carlsen, 2006), although the purely electoral democracy certainly has its own limits. In declarative terms, in the majority of the governments, the so called unique neoliberal model is being surpassed and they intend to implement new social politics. Because of it, we hold that something new is occurring in Latin America in the beginning of the 21st century, not only in the defeating of the authoritarian regimes but in the emerging construction of new options inside the fragile democracy, even though it is not definitive if this process is a matter of a more permanent and consolidated tendency.

I have to thank especially some students of International Relations at ITESO (Jesuit University in Guadalajara) as Alejandra Mendoza, Olivia Zúñiga, Miguel Angel Torres and Rafael Garcia, who in some moment of

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Ignacio Medina Núñez
*medina48@yahoo.com*

# Chapter I

# Dissolution of Ideological Borders or Ideological Confrontation?

*"Left and right are not absolute concepts, but historically relative.*
*In other words, they are only two ways of cataloguing different political ideas,*
*and therefore, not the only terms and not always the most significant…*
*The right winger is primarily concerned with safeguarding tradition,*
*and the left winger, on the other hand wishes, above everything else,*
*to liberate his fellows human beings from the chains imposed on them*
*by the privileges of race, class, rank, etc.*
*Tradition and Emancipation can be interpreted as final or fundamental aims,*
*and as such cannot be renounced by either side; but they can be achieved*
*by different means in different times and situations"*
(Bobbio, 1995)

## Right and Left: Border Dissolution

These concepts, which confrontations have meant so much in the whole modern world of politics, emerged from the historical reference of the French Revolution in 1789.[11] This reference scenario lies in a specific space within the National Assembly of representatives who, on the one hand, defended the new model of the republic and who, moreover, were supporters of the monarchical model. This is a clear simplification, which were

[11] At the meetings of the French National Assembly, which were held in August-September 1789, at the time of the discussion on the proposed veto of the deposed King Louis XVI, were gathered on the right side the supporters of the veto right, while opponents of the veto, called patriots, stood on the left side.

grouped on the left who sought to take revolutionary positions, brandishing the principles of liberal democracy, compared to those located on the right side, defending the absolutist state and particularly the King Louis XVI. It represents a simplification of only two positions, because in practice the so-called left gathered many moderate and radical groups with different levels of power and means of action, which despite their common revolutionary ideology, confronted each other.[12] These left ideologies are going to succeed in France when the beheading of Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette took place, but led, with Robespierre, to the establishment of a regime of terror with violent and destructive means among the revolutionary leaders.

For the twentieth century, in France, the ideological struggle between the left and the right remained, but each may have many parties and movements within. As in many countries, like when talking about the contradiction of social classes,[13] also the left and the right fields were not rigidly determined but we can distinguish their own internal tendencies, for example, radicals, moderates, and even a center which takes various elements from each block. In such cases as in Perú in 1978, when more than 30 parties were competing in the electoral process, more than 10 were leftist parties, others were rightist and a few others in the center.

Considering the case of México in the Seventies, during the emergence of the political reform proposal made by President José López Portillo, there were known, for example, many different political groups of different tendencies, which were categorized in different ideological signs: Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST: Workers Socialist Party), Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores (PMT: Workers Mexican Party), Partido Comunista Mexicano (PCM: Mexican Communist Party), Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR: Socialist Revolutionary Party), Partido Popular Socialista (PPS: Socialist Popular Party), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN: Party of National Action), Partido Demócrata

[12] The first groups of the French left were the Jacobins, the Cordelians, the Girondines, the Montagnais, the *Sans-Culottes*, etc.. All were in favor of the model of the Republic, a model of government without king, but all of them were also confronted violently by the peculiarities of their positions. On the right were all the so-called monarchists, who were in favor of the restoration of the king or at least retain their right of veto over the affairs of state.

[13] Marx clearly pointed out the contradiction of two basic classes (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the ruling class and the dominated), but within each one of them, when referring to specific situations like "class struggle in France" were many groups who were also called classes: landowners, bankers, industrialists, farmers, industrial workers, the petty bourgeoisie, etc. This economic analysis was also taken by Mao Tse-tung in China, to seek even contradictory alliances between social classes within the same social formation.

Mexicano (PDM: Mexican Democrat Party), etc. (Cfr. Medina I., 1978). And then there began to emerge a few others who sought to represent a more centrist ideology: Partido Verde Ecologista Mexicano (PVEM: Mexican Green Ecologist Party), Partido del Trabajo (PT: Labor Party)… and the most radical leftist group like the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN: Zapatist Army of National Liberation). For its part, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI: Institutional Revolutionary Party) was always presented as an heir of the Mexican Revolution, and therefore of a revolutionary left, to distinguish it from the right, but shifting towards ideological positions of a moderate center.

The research conducted by Rene Redmond (1993, 2005) is very illustrative in the discussion of this issue, which asks something to our purpose: does the traditional division between left and right makes sense? For him, for example, the fundamental differences between right and left in France have been disappearing, reaching some fundamentals consensus on what the Republic, Democracy, and Secularism are. "In this way, Republic and Democracy, are institutions that are now no longer a principle of division or discord: that's not what divides left and right; they are an element of consensus among the French". (Rédmond, 1993: 27)

Redmond mentions that, in France, the revolution of 1789 divided the French right and left: in favor of the revolutionary change towards the republic or in favor of the absolutist monarchy. In the XIX century, in 1889, the ideological division still existed, but 200 years after the Storming of the Bastille, there was no contradiction, and cites the following confirmation: "In his introduction to his great Histoire des Droit, published in 1992, Jean Francois Sirinelli referred to numerous public opinion surveys conducted between 1989 and 1991, which revealed that between 55 and 56% of those interviewed, thought that this ideological divide was already outdated". (Rédmond, 2005: 46)

In a paralle in Mexican history, there was a clear change in the history of the twentieth century after the 1910 revolution; in fact, the new government, with the hegemonic party that ruled the country for 71 years since 1929, took the revolutionary ideology facing the right which was represented by PAN and other groups such as the *sinarquismo*. However, with the alternation of the presidency in 2000, the government of President Fox never questioned the revolution, only made some small changes giving, for example, more importance to Francisco I Madero than to Emiliano Zapata; this last one had more radical aims (distribution of land) than Madero (fair elections).

Going back again to the conception of the republican model, we want to point out other key points that divided clearly the French left and right:

One was the religious question, which may also be a thing of the past; now is widely accepted that each person can be free to profess their religious beliefs without the government having to impose mandatory religious practices and beliefs from the Head of State.

Before, it was considered that the right opted for capitalism and the left for socialism. But throughout the twentieth century, social success in various European countries showed the great benefits of a society with the Keynesian welfare state type, within the basic rules of free enterprise and capitalist competitiveness. Even the clearest option during the dominance of the neoliberal model, between left (by opting for state-owned enterprises) and right (by opting for privatization) has been disappearing. In France in the eighties, Francois Mitterrand was presented as the candidate who was going to fight capitalism, and yet the whole time the Socialist Party was in power, followed the rules of the European capitalist model, the party even privatized some companies, something that was not done when the right was in power. Sarkozy, however President of France since the elections of May 2007, accused the left of inaction and reactionary; he, who represented a party that most of the people call rightist, has said that he is inspired by theorists associated with the left like Antonio Gramsci: "In fact, I have done mine the analysis of Gramsci: the power is won by ideas". (Sarkozy, Le monde diplomatique, 2007: 8)

It was also felt that the left was in favor of the proletariat, the workers, while the right had its option for the wealthy and big business, viewed as the only way to grow the economy. However, for various reasons, both political tendencies relate to people in general, the rights of citizens, the political rights of all inhabitants. Somehow, the language is converging towards the political rights of all: "the notion of citizenship is based on the recognition of political rights". (Touraine, 2005: 94)

If we still want to add another point to the dissolution of ideological borders, the European Union (EU) Project is the perfect one. To favor or not this major integration project, has not been a matter of ideologies of left or right; in favor or against this project was a partnership between the two ideologies; saying yes or no to the European constitution proposal in the French referendum in 2005, there was the right and the left on both sides. Even right-wing government such as Sarkozy in France or Merkel in Germany, are the main drivers of the European Union.

Moreover, it has been said in many circles of opinion, that one of the permanent features of the left is the option for change, while the right chooses

tradition and conservatism. But the historical experience of societies confuses many of these characteristics in many cases: the history of capitalism has clearly shown how the values of profit have been imposed in order to change traditional customs of people; changes driven by economic globalization at the end of the twentieth century and representing the interests of the industry and rightist groups of power, are still revolutionizing with drastic changes the lifestyle within nations: the entire world has changed dramatically from the early twentieth century to the early twenty-first century. Another case was the situation in the former USSR, when the governmental left along with the State Socialism defended the statu quo facing those who criticized the State and were fighting for more freedom in the Soviet model: the left had become conservative, and accused all critics of being right-wingers and imperialists. We can quote another example, when at the end of the Twentieth Century the trends of the left began to defend the welfare state model (regardless of its content in any country) over all the changes that the right began to propose to reduce the state and fight for free trade. With this, we can again quote Sarkozy during his campaign to run for the French presidency: "our strength will be a party in motion; the socialists are the ones who have become conservatives". (Le monde diplomatique, 2007: 8)

Redmond's conclusion towards France is clear: "the distinction between right and left is no longer relevant, it does not determine the position of one party or another, or clarifies the motivations for choosing a specific position" (Rédmond, 2005: 74). However, it seems clear that the blurring of ideological positions has become a global phenomenon as everywhere we see the movement of ideas and alliances between parties and movements of different ideologies: right parties are now close to center positions in order to win voters (postulating typical demands of the left on popular grievances), parties of the radical left moderate their positions and even change their names (removing, for example, the name of communism, a concept so vilified by the media) to not scare some of the people and lose votes.

We can clearly see, in addition, a number of important policy issues that have become common for any government, regardless of their ideological background: security for all citizens, the fight against terrorism, fighting poverty, battle against drugs and drug trafficking, etc.. This has contributed to the political parties of left and right to have common agendas in their proposals, differing in many cases not by their aims but only by the way of their programs, promising only more effectiveness than their opponents do.

## Permanence of the Ideological Confrontation

However, to not stay with the feeling that causes one of the ironic poems of Nicanor Parra ("*La izquierda y la derecha unidas jamás serán vencidas*"), it must be admitted that, although it can be proved that the distinctions between the traditional ideologies are vanishing, in general, they are always present in political struggle. i.e., the difference seems to expire at a certain ideological perspective, but the borders have not disappeared: the struggle of the so—called left and right is more present than ever in national debates. There is a consensus but there is also a fundamental division, separation and political struggle between positions and points of view. In the same opinion polls where a majority feels that the distinction between right and left is outmoded, there is also a majority that agrees to face up to it: in November 1990, only 34% of French people agree that this difference in ideology was meaningful, but 38% were recognized as one of the left and 28% as one of right, i.e., a total of 66%… the difference between right and left have not disappeared completely" (Rédmond, 1993: 47-48). And if we look at the electoral politics of France in the 2007 elections, many discussions, announcements and reports in the media helped to distinguish clearly the choice of the electorate, including candidates in the following options: right, left, extreme right, extreme left, center and "others". Empirical reality shows that in France, and also anywhere in the world, there are many issues that separate interest groups in society that are reflected in political life in which a struggle is being waged, especially in electoral times: social policy, abortion, women's position in society, the death penalty, immigration, national identity, the fight against poverty and unemployment, fiscal measures, security policies…

The crisis of socialism in Eastern Europe and the disappearance of the former USSR provoqued that the ideological left tied to the flow of Marxism-Leninism lost credibility; eventhough, we can see that there is still a big confrontation between those who postulate the need for urgent and essential changes when a vast majority of human beings on the planet live in an empirical situation of alienation and exploitation, and those who accept the differences and inequalities in society as something natural, against which there can be made only minor reforms and some welfare programs.

With this, we can join the position of Bobbio (1995), to assert that the dichotomy of positions between left and right still has a fundamental meaning in the way of doing politics; "We can even say that the left and right are terms that the political language has been adopted throughout the nine-

teenth century until nowadays, to represent the universe of confrontational politics" (Bobbio, 1995, chap. 2), although, we should admit that these concepts are relative, spatial and referring to certain societies where their meaning can vary with time. It can be said that the left still has a meaning, insofar as it proposes the need for liberation and emancipation of human beings who are subject to certain chains imposed by powerful groups who take resources from its social position and privileges of race, class, elite, or economical, political or military strength.

However, the right is not far either of these postulates, since they cannot close their eyes to the inequality that exists within any society. Thus, the main distinction between left and right could be found in the way of how to tackle social inequality. "The most frequent criteria to distinguish right from left is the attitude taken by men in society facing the idea of equality; this idea is, with liberty and peace, one of the main aims that men intend to reach and to whom they are willing to fight" (Bobbio, 1995, chap. 6). On one side, then, there are those who consider the inequalities as a result of historical development of society, which have been caused precisely by humans, and therefore, it is possible to be processed through the same actions of individuals and social groups. On the other hand, there are those who would think inequality as "natural" and thus, consequently, face the impossibility of changing that drastically;[14] the right then is accepting the great inequalities among human beings as unchangeable, which cannot be fought only with minor reforms and certain types of assistance programs.

While it is useful in distinguishing these political ideologies, why then is there confusion and why is there a new approaching of positions between the two ideologies in terms of action programs in different societies?

During the twentieth century, many left trends surged postulating clearly socialism and communism, and they came at the head of state having effective power in many governments. However, the debacle of socialism in Eastern Europe and the fall of the former Soviet Union offered a blunt view on the impossibility of short-term construction of an alternative society to capitalism; somehow, many currents of the left, have had to moderate their positions from the radical confrontation against the capitalism toward moderate reform within the system. In this way, although Proudhon was ideologically and politically defeated by Marx in one of the congresses

[14] Some times, they have even opted for religious arguments recalling the words of Jesus in the Gospels "You will always have the poor among you" (John 12: 8), wanting to assert an irremediable gap between rich and poor throughout human history.

of the International Association of Workers, his proposal for collaboration with government forces in turn, accepting the need for moderate reforms as a way to better society has been claiming in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

On the other hand, we must take into account an empirically verified fact: not all (or individuals, or groups or parties, or governments) who say they have an ideology of the left are consistent in practice of their actions with the principles they say inspired them. Or at least, in many cases, it can be seen that many left-wing ideologies have been used by various groups (such as Pol Pot in Cambodia, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, or the National Socialist Party of Hitler), covered in ideologies that claimed to fight for socialism, had nothing to do with the left. There were some times in the ancient USSR when Stalin, in the 1920's, sent to trial and killed many of his former companion leaders during the 1917 Leninist revolution; facing him and another socialist leaders, other left ideologies have been born (like Trosky vs Stalin) that claimed themselves as the true left. It could happened, like Castoriadis (1975) said, that Marxism itself (the symbol of many leftist groups) could became an old ideology that only served to justify some bureaucracies in power (a real right power), even though the dominant elites considered themselves as representatives of the popular classes.

It is also true that the approching of positions between left and right has also been the result of the new processes of the twentieth century. The working class was no longer considered the only revolutionary movement by the left as shown by Mao Tse-tung to draw farm workers (the peasants that Marx had called the petty bourgeoisie) in China as the principal architects of a prolonged movement of a popular war that came to triumph in 1949. In addition, the student movement in France in May 1968 as some writings of Herbert Marcuse noted, showed the potential of young students. But it was especially the so-called "new social movements" like feminism and environmentalists that showed there could be alliances between the left and right in order to build broad organizations of citizents who do not want to belong any party or any ideological tendency.

In the movement for women's rights, for example, Bernard Stiegler reported this case in 1929: "Edward Barneys, for whom the key problem of the large industrial states of the twentieth century will be the domain of public opinion and the control of individual and collective behavior…, proposes his services to the Philip Morris Company, which was in serious financial situation, to which he makes the following offer: the U.S. is a puritanical

country where women do not smoke, but smoking can be encouraged by breaking taboos and by an advertising campaign focusing on the female unconsciousness. The emancipation of women will pass through the cigarette… With this, Philip Morris expands its market and is out of the crisis (Stiegler, Le Nouvel observateur 2007: 25). In a curious way, economics, women's liberation and the need for behavioral changes in the population were joined at a given time.

In this way, we cannot say that it is the right which defends traditional values and the left the one that advocates for change. As noted by Stiegler, referring to the 1968 student movement in France, many thought that the defense of the capitalist system was represented by the right and traditional values, while the students were leftist and wanted to symbolically destroy these values. But historical analysis can clearly show that the process of capitalist production has subverted much of the traditional values of society, changing not only the economy but the politics, culture and the old social imaginaries. Then, where is the left? Was it not represented by defenders of the traditional costumes?

## In a pluralistic world

With the preceding historic identities changing, is there not sufficient reason to confuse the many parties and movements? Is there a left and a right clearly defined? Is it worthwhile to continue using these categories of political analysis?

In practice we know that not all who confesses publicly to a specific ideology responds to it in practice, and there has been significant shifting in ideologies when it is accepted that the coming to political power by a government or a revolutionary leader does not necessarily guarantee a better society.

Despite all the confusion created, there is a historical and theoretical basis for further holding the traditional dichotomy of the political categories of left and right. Lorenzo Meyer states that the term of the left "was coined in the eighteenth century, during the French Revolution (the ones who sat on the radical left during meetings), but its equivalent has been around since the beginning of political activity. Left is a term that identifies those who at different times and circumstances have spoken or acted in favor of radical change, with an ethical argument and explicit role in the interests of the majority. In this perspective, the Gracus and Cayus brothers in ancient Rome,

descendats from Scipio, the African, were leftists because as members of the Tribunals proposed to implement an agrarian reform in order to improve the conditions of the citizens. Also leftist was the mestizo priest José María Morelos y Pavón, who not only fought for the independence of the New Spain, but also for a social justice policy to decrease the gap created by three centuries of colonialism among the very poor and the few very rich. And it is no coincidence that they and many others who chose to have similar positions died at the hands of the defenders of the status quo, the right". (Meyer, 2005: 97)

However, beyond the self definition of each organization, we need to give practical content to the ideology in each locality, taking into account that, within each local area, there are not always two opposing positions, but dozens of movements, leaders and parties, among which there may be many conflicts and alliances. The conjunctural analysis therefore has to outweigh the principles declared by the leaders and ideological interpretations of the theories; must be done a continuously conjunctural historical analysis to see who can offer and implement certain goals into something that can help improve the living conditions of most people.

Besides the option to continue to sustain the validity of certain fundamental differences between left and right because of the persistence of shifting ideological borders, I feel it is important to undertake further in practice the proposal of Pasquino, who thinks more in terms of a democratic system in place where they can have different ideologies and programs, according to the avatars of electoral processes. Although anyone can be recognized with an affinity for the two positions (or more, when broken down other adjectives such as "moderate" or "extreme") must be recognized that it is not desirable to reach a permanent and indefinite domination of a particular social group in any government, and therefore, in view of democratic governance, we should always admit the possibility of alternation within the meaning of the population, with certain and reliable rules. "Only if the right and left have the perspective of effective government, and equally effective fears of losing the government through democratic procedures, then they will seek to control and drive the processes of globalization" (Pasquino, 2004). Although, as he points out, it is necessary to put certain conditions: "Right and Left, both in government and in opposition, have the great opportunity to ensure democratic governance if, first, they act responsibly, or if they accept responsibility for the decisions they make. If, second, they faced, essentially, the policies and not values, and also the constitutional rules (accepting that

they could be exceptions). Third, they should be not so distant; they should not be so extremists. If, fourth, they remain strictly in the political level and they do not use or try to use some extra ressources or anti-political ressources. If, fifth, they can be alternatevely sometimes in the goberment and they take political profit from this opportunity". (Pasquino, 2004)

This perspective is very important as in any democratic contest with established institutional rules; both groups called the right or the left can get access to power. In the mid-nineteenth century, Engels proposed that with universal suffrage, the working class would accede to the government by democratic means because they are the majority; however, in democracy, there is no absolute determinism: class interest (if they still use the term) is never mechanically expressed through conscience classes to vote for a single organization; the role of the media has a lot to do during electoral periods. That is why the triumph of the entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi occurred through democratic means in Italy; therefore, in Ecuador, in 2006, the multimillionaire Álvaro Noboa took many votes during the presidential elections, which led him to win the first round. That is also why, in Argentina in June 2007, the rightist Mauricio Macri earned 60% of the vote, and became Mayor of Buenos Aires, calling the attention of journalist Horacio Verbitsky as follows: "it would be the first time in the electoral history of Argentina, in a political representation of the ruling classes, that the government of one of the most important districts in the country, was won through legal and peaceful means". (*La Jornada*, 25 de Junio de 2007)

In this way, it is reasonable, even though one has to be fascinated by some of the policy options in relation to the functioning of society, we must find a style of government that allows the rotation, according to the will of the majority of a population expressed in votes. Any government should be transparent and subject to various controls, especially the most reliable election results, after certain periods determined by the laws of each country. In Latin America, these rules of electoral democracy are still debated because there are not sufficiently consolidated institutions everywhere to fully guarantee the results. This is certainly a big task to win, but left and right, then, beyond the offer of their ideological positions from their own values, should be judged for their political practice, subject to a possible alternating it regularly; can never be valid for a government to impose itself by an indefinite period of time, under the excuse that people ignore what is suitable to their interests and thereby want to justify a patriotic fraud. In the basic rules of the democratic process, the left and right should have a basic consensus for a democratic governance.

# Chapter II
# Utopia and New Social Imaginary

*"As a political regime, democracy tends to appear as something static. However, it can be conceived as a form of life, something especially dynamic. This idea comes in part of the republican conceptions, surplus of the imaginary of the intense participation of the old democracy of Athens, tributary also of the conception of popular sovereignty of Rousseau"*
(Paez R., en *Lizcano*, 2006).

In the last centuries of the human history a clear distinction has been made between two periods: the time of the European feudal society and the time of Modernity. This distinction has its foundation in the coming of age of a society centered in God to an anthropological one with the birth of the Humanistic Philosophy and Rationalism. The difference between these two periods can be observed in multiple examples, for in the XVI century we saw the appearance of numerous events that testify to this change: the appearance of natural sciences, the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the rebirth of Political and Social Sciences, the appearance of the new capitalistic model of production through the wage-earning force of labor, etc. It was the change from an alienated society in the obscurantism of a god-centered vision that only wanted to focus on the "beyond," to an anthropocentric society where the human being was transformed in the center of the universe, and above everything his capacity to reason. However, in the modern time, rationality is not necessarily fighting with utopia and imagination.

## Rationality and Utopia

Rationalism and modernity were born in Europe but were then extended to the rest of the world; the history of capitalism, in particular, brought the Industrial Revolution of the XVIII and XIX Centuries with the exaggerated use of the concepts of development and progress. All this was produced from an unlimited confidence in the constant use of human reason, that could not but lead to better stages in human life, particularly when, in the centuries before the Renaissance, a political transition from the absolutist state to a liberal and democratic model was also experienced.

The most important names of European Rationalism were Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz; they expressed an unlimited confidence in human reason as a universal propelling force capable to lead to better stages of development. With them Thomas More also developed the concept of utopia during the XVIII century until the Utopian Socialism of the XIX Century (Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen), including Marx's aspiration to a classless society. In a possible dialogue between both tendencies, it can be asked if, on the basis of reason, if it is legitimate to aspire to utopia, especially if we analyze the particular conditions of human existence and compare them with what should be according to some elemental concepts of equality, justice and brotherhood.

Hirschberger, as a well-known author in the History of Philosophy, points out that "with Descartes (1596-1650) modern philosophy was initiated" (Hirschberger, 1998: 163), for he is the initiator of Rationalism, a tendency that "literally means philosophy of reason. In concrete terms, this means that reason or intelligence are the main source in Philosophy (in principle, both things are the same), with mind and concepts" (Hirschberger, 1998: 162). But one level of rationalism is the systematic reflection on general principles on being and the other one is its application to history and the understanding of society's social and political problems. In this second level Joannes Althusius (1557-1638) started to shine during the XVII Century, and Hugo Grocio (1583-1645) and Spinoza (1632-1677), who started to utilize reason for the political analysis of human societies.

The German and Calvinist writer Althusius, in his treaty about politics (*Politica methodice digesta, exemplis sacris et profanes ilustrata)* is one of the first to oppose absolutist ideas under the principle that if rulers manage the people, the people have something to say about those who should be the rulers and for that he "declared that sovereignty rests always, necessarily and in-

alienably, on the people… Althusius' political theory is outstanding for his affirmation of popular sovereignty and for the use he did about the idea of contract" (Copleston, 1988: 311). On his part, Grocio, especially with his texts *Mare liberum, De iure belli ac pacis* and *De iure naturae et gentium*, has become one of the firsts theoretical thinkers in International Affairs, for the globalization of commerce obligated nations to regulate even more the right of war favoring the peaceful connivance between nations. In this way, it can be thought that, on the base of reason, one can strongly criticize the society's concrete way of existing because it contradicts something that appears like a demand of natural law: in practice, it was possible to start to say that in a national State where a king rules with absolute legal authority over all subordinates we are looking a situation contrary to reason for those so called citizens should have to say something about the one who should rule them. Reason and utopia could be connected to impulse a social fight against the establishment.

However, it was Spinoza,[15] in a particular way, who stands out the most with a rational and mathematic method by bringing back Aristotle's three models of society (monarchy, aristocracy and democracy) and placing them again in the modern discussion, but pointing out, in contrast with Aristotle, (who prefered aristocracy), the rational basis of the democratic model. Just like his contemporary in England, Thomas Hobbes, he also believed that humans are natural born enemies, but more than concluding the necessity of a *Leviathan,* a totalitarian power over the society, Spinoza inclined to the idea of the pact of a general assembly. A life guided by reason will never be able to justify a tyrannical government. In his Theological-Political Treaty, he affirms that the most rational State is the most free; "the freest republic is that whose laws are founded in reason" (Spinoza, 1999: 361); the purpose is to live with full consent under the entire guidance of reason, and that kind of life is assured in the best way in "a democracy, which can be defined as general assembly that communally owns its sovereign right over everything that is in his sphere of power" (Spinoza, 1999: 360-1). With that he finally achieves his conclusion: "I have preferred to study this way of government (democracy) for it seems to me like the most natural and the more harmonious form to the liberty that nature has given to all men, for in this State no

[15] Juan Carlos Scanone points out that before Spinoza it was Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) the father of modern democracy because in his 1612 text *De legibus* he points out that king's power is limited by the favor of people; with that, he confronted the theory of divine power that the kings adjudicated themselves.

one transfers to another his natural right, but he hands over it in favor of the majority of the entire society of which he is part of". (Spinoza, 1999: 361)

If the democracy model is the most rational, if scientific knowledge opens up countless possibilities for human and social developments, if trade becomes universal extending itself beyond national-state limits, etc., the imagination and thought were able to flight to the future picturing not just the end of the monarchic authoritarianism but also a time when nations could live in peace, without the necessity of war. The same rationality was the basis of utopia, but not anymore as something impossible to do —which is its original meaning: what doesn't have a place— but thinking about a historical project in which human beings must commit themselves to it.

Hobbes presented his "*Leviathan*" as a totalitarian power based in a historical need to maintain the order and social stability between humans who are always prepared for war; however, the XVIII century in Europe, since the beginnings of Illustration, it also brought the desires of a cosmopolitan society in harmony, as a result of the accumulation of knowledge. Armand Mattelart (2000) shows us in his excellent book about planetary utopia how this idea was raised by numerous authors.

In this way, Bossuet (1627-1704) and Fenelon (1651-1715) elaborated concepts like "General Society of the Human Gender" and the one of "Big Fatherland of the Human Gender", which are "the sponsors in which the XVIII Century is situated on" (Mattelart, 2000: 74). Several of these writings were inspired in Thomas More's and Tomasso Campanela's utopian tradition, showing that it was a necessary tendency for humanity, but also many of them were inspired as much in reason as in voluntarism. In particular, for example, in 1708, the abbot of Saint-Pierre wrote a text called: *'Inform About Roads reparation'* where he started "to meditate on the necessity of establishing a during peace, with the purpose of guaranty a perpetual trade between the nations, and he also dedicated himself to the task of publishing another text titled *Project for founding the perpetual peace in Europe* (*Project pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe)*, where he also explained that the mentioned project covered every state of the earth" (Mattelart, 2000: 78). His fundamental consideration is about the rational way on which the sovereignty of the big nations decides to form a permanent sovereign society where they resign their arms and accord a way of conciliation through the instrument of a perpetual general assembly. As Mattelart says, "chimaeric or not, useless novel or not, Saint-Pierre's work represents a pull in the overture of the economic, philosophic and diplomatic reflection to the dimension of the

whole roundness of the earth, as a means of welfare and progress, against the spirit of conquest". (Mattelart, 2000: 83)

The XVIII Century saw around twenty projects of general, universal or European pacification from diverse French, British, Italian and German thinkers, with the intention of forming the human gender as a unique republic. We could also make a reference to the work of Louis Sebastien Mercier (1740-1814) published in 1771 under the title of "The year 2440: A Dream if ever there was one" (*L'an 2440. Rêve s'il en fut jamais)*: in it, the author dreams about what will the future bring for the world, more than two centuries after his time, where there would not be religious prejudices, where everyone would look at each other as brothers no matter if they were Chinese or Indian, where there would only exist one family under a common paternity. The logic of rationalism imposed itself in the conception of human evolution because people, by duplicating their knowledge, would love and estimate each other; in this way, as Mercier considers, in the entire future of the world, "everywhere, war is consider to be a stupid and barbarian extravagance". (Mattelart, 2000: 83)

Nevertheless, Leibniz, one of the biggest exponents of philosophic rationalism, is very skeptic of this vision where the progress points necessarily to a society of perpetual peace; he wrote a letter to the Abbot of Saint-Pierre in 1715, criticizing his headstrong vision of that supranational option; the basis of Leibniz's critique is the study of practical history of the people, whose development does not correspond necessarily to a evolution of empirical progressive phases to better stages of human coexistence, even though they have a better knowledge. Voltaire, on his part, qualified the Abbot Saint-Pierre as the "Saint-Pierre D'Utopie".

Some decades ago I considered with attention and attraction Mannheim's eclectic vision in his 1929 text *Ideology and Utopia*; then Paul Ricoeur published another book with the same title but with a different interpretation. Mannheim understood the concepts of ideology and utopia with an intimate relation but with diversions and incongruities in the matter of reality; Ricoeur gave them, in change, a positive interpretation, considering them as necessary discourses for life through a symbolic-narrative elaboration that categorized the social and cultural imagination in a predetermined moment; in fact, Ricoeur's widest project about the imagination of Philosophy connects itself in a profound way to the whole interpretation about the power of the imaginary in societies. Actually, according to one of the phrases attributed to Albert Einstein we could affirm that: "imagination is more im-

portant than knowledge"; it is what makes us cross the limits that reality imposed on ourselves so we can be able to fight for a better world.

Could anyone make a synthesis between Mannheim and Ricoeur about the same issue? I think that both interpretations about ideology and utopia can coexist in all of us. There are some who constantly utilize the world ideology as a degrading symbol: ideology can mean alienation, being out of reality thinking only aboout utopias. And effectively, it is Mannheims' perspective: we have elaborated ideas that have taken control of us, ideas that we worship, even though they are away from empirical reality or seem to deform it. Something similar can happen with the concept of utopia: the adjective "*utopian*" for somebody can be degrading for it looks like if it were synonym of a dreamer that has lost ground. Nevertheless, utopia can be also defined as a joint of ideas-strengths that are capable of moving an individual or a social group to formulate and carry out new projects; in this way, the concept bothering and turns into a creative source of new realities; the world, then, can not exist without an utopia, without a creative imagination.

In fact, both Mannheim and Ricoeur can be defended in their conception about ideology and utopia, depending on the two contradicting tendencies present in every human being. Using Edgar Morin's terms, it could be affirmed that when reason turns into rationalization, we got alienated with the ideology and mutilate ourselves by wanting to classify in a necessary form every piece of information about empirical reality inside the simplistic reduction already adopted; however, only imagination and utopia, that are also human capacities, can make us return to a critical and creative thinking where ideas become fountains of movement. This is why both Manuel Castells and Alain Touraine give a great value to identity analysis in social movements; actually, that is how Castells' second volume of his excellent work about the *Era of information* is titled: *the power of identity*.

According to Kant, there is a natural human tendency towards lasting peace (in a similar way to the also human tendency to war), but it can be modified in practical life according to the possibilities of human liberty itself, which can move back and forth from the imagined objects according to the actions taken by individuals and groups. Kant hopes that the rational actions will contribute with certainty to the construction of better societies: "*…Taking for our part rational dispositions, we could hurry the arrival of that time so blessed for the posterity… War itself, not only will result little by little a tricky venture, of insecure ending for both parties, but also a lot to weight for the grieves that the State feels*

*later with its public debt in constant increasing… It already starts to wake up a feeling in the members, interested in the conservation of the whole; this is what gives us hope that, after several transforming revolutions, at the end it will be a reality that supreme purpose of Nature, a state of world or cosmopolitan citizenship".* (Kant, 2002: 58-60)

The final consideration is the insistence and the bet, not for the destructive possibilities of unsociability —that will always be able to act both upon nationals and within the community of independent nations— but for the sociability capacity of human beings guided by a reason increasingly shared every time and by its freedom. In other words, the knowledge of nature's "*intention"* can have a propellant effect to accelerate humanity's development to better levels of worldwide coexistence. The capacity of ideas promoting changes in the real world of societies can be expressed in Kant's words as follows: "*A philosophical essay that intents to build the universal history with arrangement to a Nature's plan that tends to the entire citizenship association of the human kind, we must not just consider this as a possible, but it is necessary that we also think in its propellant effect…".* (Kant, 2002: 61)

Edgar Morin, on his part, coincides also with these two inherent tendencies of the human being: on one side are the possibilities of the *homo sapiens*, but also is in his interior the tendency of the *homo demens,* for we all men and women experiment that natural sociability of which Aristotle talked in the IV a.C. century, but also Kant's unsociability and Hobbe's natural tendency to war. In this way, in the societies of the XX and XXI centuries, for example, we can admire the great possibilities of progress and advance that humanity can have in the era of technology and information and, at the same time, the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the new century war atrocities over Afghanistan and Iraq and the terrible levels of torture and genocide that have been denounced in the Hague International Court of Justice.

The contemporary society has been called by Ulrick Beck a "society in risk", because the current accumulation of knowledge in globalization's time, on the one hand, provides us with greater opportunities to transform human current conditions and, on the other, puts us in the risks of huge destructions, of a big and increasing inequality and of a big spiritual impoverishment; it is the succes of contemporary society itself what puts in risk the human survival. At the same time, in our asymmetric societies, he also points that not everyone has the same possibilities to influence in its transformation: "*The opportunities that different social groups have of constituting themselves as political actors inside the game of the big powers are terribly bad distributed".* (Beck, 2002: 186)

In this sense, along with the greater capacity with which the world has been able to build in other to produce food, along with the greater capacity to govern in a world wide scale, today, also, a greater inequality and poverty is expressed by a large part of the population with great amounts of violence and exclusion and the dispossessed have not had the conditions to become true participants of social influence in the world of globalization. The great challenge of building a world community of solidarity is a very difficult one and will not be achieved without the creation of new knowledge, actions and social movements.

It is logical to think, like Habermas, in a positive way by pointing out that currently "*in globalization's process, the capacity of cooperation of the rational selfish people is overtaken"* (Habermas, 1999). This can coincide with certain nature's biological "*intention"* that heads us to the construction of democratic societies, where the principles of action for a civil society more organized can be settled, with bigger institutional elements of gobernability, with more respect to human rights and better laws of protection for the so devastated nature, etc.

Nevertheless, historical reality shows us how far war is from disappearing: commercial wars between nations turn to big scale military confrontations, religious fundamentalisms start wars of the God that can be seen as wars of races and cultures; determined countries step over multilateralism to impose their will even over the United Nations,…The debate, then, will always be in the contradiction between the sociability and the unsociability of human beings always aware of the uncertainty about which of both tendencies can prevail. Habermas himself points out an important conclusion that we also uphold: "*The principal matter is the following: if in civil societies and in the most extensive public spaces of government the conscience of a cosmopolitan solidarity can arise. Only under the pressure of an effective change in the citizens' conscience in the interior politics, the actors capable of a global action will be able to transform themselves, so they understand themselves as members of a community that has a single alternative: the cooperation with the others and the conciliation of their interests in spite of the contradictions."* (Habermas, 1999). Is not this proposal like the bet Teilhard de Chardin did talking about the natural tendency to a convergence of human phenomena in the omega point, which, however, would always have the alternative of failure with an also inherent tendency to dispersion on the basis of free decisions of the human being himself?

In some way, the vision of a liberating democracy can be only conceived as a triggering *leit motiv* and for it, our history, with the active participation

of human liberty, will be able to continue being that exciting line of convergent tendency with frequent contacts, although in permanent danger for the human unsociability. The world's complexity to which we are confronted, again, as Edgar Morin reiterates once and again, will never be able to be simplified by our knowledge as a universal conclusion; the interdisciplinary study of nature's and societies' complexity leads us to better approaches over an always unreachable reality; but, only through these efforts, on the basis of a bet on the prevalence of sociability over unsociability, we will be able to elaborate better strategies to control the insanity, the bestiality and the inhumanity, that are also part of the human being. The questions with which Edgar Morin finalizes his volume about the *Method* referred to "The humanity of humanity" that does not show us any certainty and security about the future: "*Are there possibilities of controlling the barbarism and to truly civilize humans?"* and he answers: *"nothing is for sure, not even the worst"* (Morin, 2001: 342). There persists, however, the bet and the passion for democracy and the participation of organized citizens in governments' public politics, whether they are from left or the right wings.

The interpretation of history as a social movement has always been fascinating in the world of Political Philosophy as the role that in can play in the vision or social imaginary of a person or a group of persons that are passionate by an ideal and, for it, they are capable of dedicating all their efforts, even sacrificing their lives. Those who are particularly concentrated in the burden of the social structures observe human beings as entities delimited by history; those who emphasize the subjectivity, overrate the power of ideals and the thought as a factor of change; and there also are those who estimate so much the unpredictable circumstances of certain moments that they want to see everything like if it were predestinated by the luck or fate. However, our intents of making social science must take all these elements together, remembering in certain way the approach of Ortega y Gasset: "*I am me and my circumstances and, if I do not save them, I do not save myself"* (Ortega y Gasset, 1984); but also it is necessary to get moving in a dialectic game, as Francisco Lizano says, walking "between utopia and reality" (Lizcano, 2006), which is the frame for his intent to reinterpret historically and conceptually democracy in Latin America.

On occasions, utopia can certainly play a role of alienating those who want to forget about the terrible world conditions, making them seek refugee only in thoughts and ideas. However, we must revitalize utopia as a generator of social change for the vision of an imaginary that contrasts with the

bad conditions of the present that also push people to execute actions in order to achieve determined purposes.

When social changes have occurred in societies' history, they have never been the product only from the objective conditions of socials contradictions; in many moments, it has been the individuals' subjectivity the source that modifies the direction of important events. But aside the objective and the subjective, it is also important to point out the importance of circumstantial phenomena that occur and that nobody anticipated, because on occasions they turn into crucial factors in setting a determined course. The luck or fate can also be a decisive factor like Victor Hugo points out, for example, in his novel *The Miserable* when he describes Napoleon's battle in Waterloo: he does not take us to the macro-historical events of transition from the absolutism to XIX century liberal societies neither to a leader's determination but to a specific detail that might be perceived almost as insignificant because, the night before the battle, it had rained a lot so that the canyons that could have granted the victory to Napoleon could not be taken to a strategic point against the British: "if it would not have rained the night of the 17th to the 18th of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been another" (Hugo Victor, 1974: 311). In a precise moment, what Machiavelli called "fate", is capable of modifing radically the course of events. In a phrase that Robert Harris attributes to Cicero, the following is mentioned: "in politics one can make as much plans as one wants, but, at the end, luck decides". (Harris, 2007: 303)

However, we cannot live leaving all up to fate or destiny or luck or to a divine will that has everything predetermined; for that, we must use reason, logic, planning, etc. for this is what makes humans the creators of their own history; societies are a product of humanity and not the result of coincidence. What exists in a determined moment of history in a society is the citizens' and leaders' responsibilities that can also be modified in some direction or in the other depending on the free actions of people.

Within a given determined structural context, it is the subjectivity of the actors what turns into a fundamental factor to impulse the social-economical and political transformations that are required; the same *success and error* experiences turn into a learning of constant transformation; what we must not abandon is the passion for utopia. This is to say, the course of any country or the whole world is not determined mechanically by the structures but we should always be looking forward to unexpected moments where the appearance of new leadership or situations can make a process advance or go back through the political action.

What we previously said about luck and fate, however, will also be a surprising element that we have to consider every time: even though the always necessary short and long term planning that political leaders have to do to make their positions win, it will be necessary to count constantly with that percentage of voluntarism, of luck (or "fate" as Machiavelli points it out in the *Prince*[16]) that has made important changes in historical situations. This has to be a new way of policy making, understood as the commitment of the individual seeking the community's interests. This does not necessarily turns us into idealists far from reality but it makes us take up again the proposals of very realists sociologists as Max Weber, who, when talking about politicians, points out their principal task: "Politics consists in a rough and prolonged penetration through brave resistances, for which it is required, at the same time, passion and moderation. It is completely true, and so history proves it, that in this world the possible cannot ever be achieve if we do not go for the impossible once and again" (Weber, 1982). The reason behind cold planning but fed by the passion should be then indispensable elements for policy making.

In contrast, we had the creation and rise of the "unique thought",[17] which proposed the neo-liberal free market model as the only way for a world economy at the end of XX Century, when Francis Fukuyama proposed his famous *End of History*, where societies' history could come out only to one society model: capitalism over a beaten communism. Fukuyama asked himself if, "at the end of the twentieth century, talking about a coherent and directional history of the human gender it could have some meaning", and he answered in a positive way appealing to "the logic of the modern natural science" putting the end of history as "an effect of economic interpretation of historical change, that does not leads (differently from Marxism) to socialism but to capitalism as its last result" (Fukuyama, 1992). In the debacle situation of Eastern European socialism and the disappearance of the USSR, a neo-liberal tendency that influenced greatly, along with his

[16] Machiavelli puts it in this way: "I do not ignore that many people believe and have believed that the world's matters are ruled by fate and God in a way that the most prudent men cannot modify them…However, and trying to conserve our free will, I accept as a fact that the fate be the judge half of our actions, but it let us rule the other half, or a little less" (Machiavelli, 1999).

[17] This expression was proposed by Ignacio Ramonet, member of ATTAC and editor of Le Monde Diplomatique, to criticize certain governments with their neo-liberal proposals for whom the free market and the economy's deregulation was the only existing way, as Margaret Thatcher had said it before: *There is no alternative.*

thought, the acting of some governments that as consequence became fortified: "The absolute faith in the market, the self economic overture and the closeness of the others, the privatization and the deregulation in the absence of a totally conformed rule of law, has turned into the new dogmas of Latin American governments". (Castañeda, 1993: 81)

In front of these mechanic interpretations, reason indicates us that there are not absolute postulates; holding on to a single thought turns into a "intellectual castration", as Edgardo Lander points out, when he mentions one of the key demands that we, Latin Americans, should have: "The claim for the things that could be different" (Lander, 1991: 162). History has not a predetermined end but it is subordinated to what humans decide to do with their own freedom. The ideological weigh of the lack of alternatives is brutal and for it many people prefer to conform themselves with the current options, killing the power of imagination and search; "we tend to believe… that it is a small part what we can change —individually, in groups or altogether— of the course of world issues, or of the way they are managed, and we also believe that, if we were capable to produce a change, it would be futile, and the least reasonable, to gather ourselves to think a different world and effort to make it exist if we believe that it could be better than the existent… If freedom has been conquered, how is it possible that the human capacity of imagining a better world and to do something to improve it has not been part of that victory?". (Bauman, 2006: 9)

Something new is arising in Latin America during the transition from XX century to XXI Century, especially in the democratic theme and its emancipatory possibilities. If in the past the idea of a democracy as a peaceful way of interchanging power between the economic elites and to continue with the same oppressive system had a lot of weigh, now it is possible to think about improving democracy to open the possibility of changing the economic model. "In Latin America, a page is being turned in its history. New imaginaries are arising and it is necessary to understand them" (Corten, 2006: 24). New projects have arised, utopias and innovative experiences of local development and inclusive in a level of democratically surged governments. There is a big power in this creative imagination over the new possibilities that are sheltered in this subcontinent's current reality; the subjectivity of the change has been putted in movement through the creation of new social imaginaries.[18]

[18] Several ideas about the new Latin American social imaginaries were published previously in the book compiled by Alejandra Chávez "Dialogue of Wisdom" ("Diálogo de saberes",

## The social Imaginary

If it is true that in many occasions the concept of utopia has been used in an alienating and degrading sense for it moves us away from empirical reality that we are living, here we want to give it a positive meaning. In México, the concept of social imaginary started to be widely discussed in the Social Sciences of the 70's. The contribution of Gilberto Giménez, inspired by Castoriadis was particularly significant when he wanted to reformulate utopia, not like something unreachable and alienated but like a propelling force for social changes. "Utopia does not have a degrading meaning, as the *unreachable*, the *purely imaginary,* an *impossible dream*, etc. Lately, we are attending a rehabilitation movement that proposes itself to recover its real sense and clarify the constructive aspect of its function especially in the psychological-political level" (Giménez, 1976); this author wanted to rehabilitate imagination's role as a part of the science and as an element of creation and innovation. The pieces of information of the empirical world are fundamental as a starting point in the process of knowledge, but, following Gaston Bachelard's[19] idea, it can be argued that there is a necessity of not being chained to present reality but to see in it all the multiples alternatives of construction of what is possible: "There is also a form of imagination linked rather to the *wish of liberation from the tyranny of the piece of information*, to transcend the perception's immediacy and to explore the world of *possibilities,* of what is but not yet. It is the imagination as an *innovative activity* having itself a character essentially prospective, anticipator and creator". (Giménez, 1976)

In this context, the discussion over imagining all the possible imaginaries is located in the epistemological field, contradicting the classical vision of the sciences subordinated only to the traditional method of the empirical data and the verification through hypothesis. And it is not about just a contemporary discussion of the lasts centuries but it comes from the beginning of philosophy as a science in ancient Greek times, since the *maieutics* of Socrates, the *idealism* of Plato and the *dialectics* of Aristotle. So, it is referred by

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Edición Aleph, Argentina, 2008), presented in an international Symposium in the UAM-Xochimilco, from January 23 to 25, 2008, in Mexico city.

[19] Gaston Bachelard has been also known as the philosopher of imagination: he made a very interesting distinction between the words "*songe"* and "rêve" to indicate the dialectic between what is real and what is dreamed. Many of his books are key for this proposal: *L'air et le songes: essai sur l'imagination de la matière* (1942); *L'air et les songes: essai sur l'imagination du mouvement* (1943) ; *La terre et les rêveries de la volanté* (1948).

René Barbier[20] in his history of this concept: "The history of the imaginary concept is linked to the dynamics of the dichotomic intellectual representations since the ancient times". (Barbier, 2007)

Barbier's perspective situates the concept of imaginary in a long historical trajectory that the Greeks began with their distinction between the real and the imagined, that continued on in the times of Romanticism and Surrealism and finally flowed into a third stage during the XX Century with Gastón Bachelard, to concede to the imaginary utopia, in a rupture with the established reality, a propelling role for social change. With Barbier's CRISE and Micheal Maffesoli's Investigation Center over the Imaginary (CRI), the meaning of the concept has been retaken both with the theoretical density that Lacan gave to it and with Castoriadis' great contributions that concede to the imaginary a constituent character in society through the political intervention.

The imaginary can be the dominant world of meanings in a determined group of humans, what we can also define as hegemonic ideology and the world of culture. However, Castoriadis presents to us a fundamental distinction: one thing is the instituted imaginary that makes us worship the ruling order as something natural and unchangeable: "in the common use of the concept of imaginary, it is a representation of the reality that guides or influences in an unconscious way, our behavior and that of the others. It is talked about a collective imaginary to justify a specific aspect of our comprehension of reality" (Corten, 2006: 7). However, another sense is that of the instituens imaginary that breaks with the real and opens itself to other alternative things as something possible to be created, as a continuous movement of auto-producing significations: "the concept that we adopt here about the imaginary means auto-production. Emancipation is an auto-production. It is an instituens imaginary that is lived as auto-production" (Corten, 2006: 23); "the instituens imaginary is the source of a new sense". (*Ídem*, 2006: 23)

We refer here this second concept of the imaginary; the concept contradicts the reality but it is not separated from it in an alienating movement as unfeasible utopia but it mobilizes resources and guides them to many emancipatory horizons where the political action, productive of new scenarios, is the fundamental element. This kind of imaginary, then, has that emancipat-

[20] René Barbier is the director of the Centre de Recherche sur l'Imaginanaire Social et l'Éducation (CRISE), of the University of Paris I, since 2004. About this situation we also take the contributions of Gilbert Durand, who was the founder of the Centre de Recherche su l'Imaginaire (CRI) in 1966 in Grenoble, France, and Castoriadis' in the 70's.

ing and auto-producing function. Inside the so called *altermundista* movement, for example, it is made a call to construct alternatives to face the wild capitalism that is promoted by the international financial organizations with their neo-liberal globalization, by saying that *another world is possible*. It is not about accepting the world as it is because it is a society that does not satisfy the necessities and the fundamentals rights of the majority of citizens, and for that it shall be modified.

Here we confront one of the fundamental points that have divided the positions of the right and left for over two centuries, in relation with capitalism as the dominant production model. There are those who defend, in a general way, the dominant statu quo or want to make different decorative changes, and there are those who want to revolutionize it in a radical way or make profound reforms that lead to a different production model.

The concepts of "left" and "right" in politics have diluted their borders, even though they still provoke numerous confrontations of ideas, especially in electoral times. The discussion will continue to be opened in the world debate, but we can also observe the growing nonconformity with the dominance of a few over the economy and the world and national politics; and these critics do not come anymore from left sectors but also from the defenders of human rights, from those who fight against the war, from those who want to defend the ecology of the planet, from all who can not stand that only a few hands accumulate the richness in a so brazen way in damage of the majority of the population.

The criticism to the capitalist system and the specific form of savage globalization that has being imposed in the last decades do not come, therefore, only from the auto-denominated left: there is a wide front that demands substantial changes and important reforms in the policy making and in the way the national economies are guided. If in a determined historic time, the capitalist production model revolutionized the feudal society with an undeniable transforming force, after several years of domination and crisis, the dynamic of the capitalist profit is being exhausted as unifying the contemporary society: "the capitalism somehow has lost its spirit: the people do not stick to its dynamism anymore. And we are also referring to the business lobbies, for they are also suffering a lack of motivation" (Stiegler B., in Nouvel Observateur, 2007: 22). If in the year 2008, the whole world has witnessed the economical crisis explosion of the capitalist model itself starting from the real-state credits and from the financial system that have produced the acknowledged world recession, it is clear that the criticism to

the model do not come only from the so called revolutionary movements or from the left in general but from wide social sectors that are recognizing the irrationality of the free market model.

## From reality to utopia in Latin America

Traditionally, Latin America has been defined as an underdeveloped subcontinent, dominated by the United States, confronted in its multiple nationalities and with high poverty, inequality and corruption levels. If we accept that our region is defined like this, can we dream with something different? Can we have a different perspective for the future? In the Latin American region there have appeared, with strength in the social debate, projects such as the Bolivarian integration and the socialism in the XXI Century. Both concepts belong to the world of utopia: how is it possible to think about the integration of Latin American countries if, in fact, there are only multiple nationalities and territories after the failure of Simón Bolívar's dream? How can we think about socialism after the debacle of East Europe and the disappearance of the Soviet Union? The appearance of leftist governments in the region is surprising for many people, but the reality is that there are many intellectuals and Latin American leaders that have made new imaginaries reemerge that contradict the end of history, that are opposed to the neo-liberal capitalist model and that talk about a new integration project, of the construction of a new socialism in the XXI century that distribute the social richness, when this model looked like a discredited objective.

The social indicators of the new imaginary are forceful: Cuba persist on its socialist model, despite its crisis and the multiple offensives of the different North American governments; Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution with President Hugo Chávez, reelected again in 2012, has been ratified by the democratic way until 2018; the triumph of Evo Morales as Bolivia's president was a reality in 2005 and was ratified later in a referendum; The victory of Rafael Correa took place in Ecuador in 2006 with the later approval of a new constitution and he is still president in 2012 hoping to win again in the 2013 elections; the turn by the Sandinist Front of National Liberation (FSLN) in the executive power occurred in the 2006 elections and Daniel Ortega was reelected again in 2012.

All these events are, in the down of the XXI century, a reference to locate a tendency inside Latin America with proposals of economical and politic-

social changes for the region. These experiences, despite their real problems, represent a major emphasis in Latin American utopia's matters. "In Latin America, hope has always been superior to the fear and to the frustrations that the rough confrontations with reality provoke and has been translated in the undisputable validity of the utopian function". (Ramírez R. M., 2007: 93)

Currently Cuba is not the only country defending its revolution. Hugo Chávez, Venezuela's President has also been noticed not only for his insults over the North American President George Bush but over all because, following the strict rules of liberal democracy, he has consolidated his leadership inside within his country with the creation of a new constituent assembly, with the survival to the 2002 *coup d'etat*, with the triumph of the 2004 referendum an with his reelection as the country's president in 2006 winning 60% of the votes and again reelected in 2012.[21]

Among the tendencies that today exist in the so called governing Latin American left, the case of Chávez is one of those that better represents the rupture with the established order and the irruption of a new social imaginary. Venezuela's particular case shows, in the second part of the XX century, a whole epoch of apparent stability after the downfall of Pérez Jiménez in 1958 and the *Pacto de Punto Fijo* (an important pact among political forces) between the principal political parties; this epoch ended with the imposing of a neo-liberal model that leaded major frustrations and demands in a country that generates large amounts of oil revenue. Chávez and his V Republic movement got to express the aspirations of other possible imaginaries: "the advent of *chavism* in Venezuela can be interpreted as a case of displacement of frontiers in the political scene with the raise of an antagonist force that unveils the frontier or the contingent character of a symbolic order". (Peñafiel, in Corten, 2006: 142)

Venezuela's case also has a great symbolic value for the Latin American integration utopia because it was Bolivar himself who formulated for the first time that aspiration during the independence process. What is compromised again, almost 200 years later, is the autonomy, the peoples' development and the processes of integration. The new country's name was given to increase this symbolic value: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. With that purpose

[21] Everyone can also see the reject —even if it were for a minimum range of votes— of the Venezuelan population at the end of 2007 to the reform proposals to the constitution that Chávez himself supported. Nevertheless, it is not the project what has been rejected but only the possibility of an undefined permanence of the president in the executive power. This clause changed again, afterwards, in another referendum.

President Chávez quotes him so many times in his innagural speech in January 2007, alluding to the hope of upcoming times: "Bolívar wrote: *I expect a lot of time… Its huge womb holds more hopes than past events… And the future events shall be superior to the past".* (Chávez, January 10th 2007)

In this way, Latin America, in its varied heterogeneity, is not living out the appearance of a new madness and populisms but the contradicting scenario between the models of homogeneous thinking and the new social imaginaries that pretend to be instituted and to be transformed in an instituen imaginary, according to the new models that some want to build: "the utopia that should draw one's attention to the sight to Latin America should be, above everything, democratic, open, flexible, tolerant and just; respectful of human dignity and of the citizen's liberties; it should provide the necessary tools to discover its own truth instead of living up to the functions of a unique truth imposed from the top, it should be conciliatory and open to dialogue and it should, in a specific way, look after the social welfare". (Ramírez R.M., 2007: 97)

Against the phase of electoral democracies that started to beat the Latin American militarism but that persisted in the same exploitation system, one of the most important utopias for Latin America is the conversion of the liberal democracy model into an emancipator democracy. With the importance of the elections, we must maintain them with better institutions that give credibility to the process, but the most important thing is the effect that the model could have in the reality of the population: "for it to be effective, democracy shall grow up in firm ground, equity's and social-economical development's… In Latin America, the establishment of democratic regimes… coincided with the implantation of neo-liberal economic politics and its disastrous social effects. If today it can be acknowledged that Washington's consensus failed, the results of such politics have influenced negatively in the assessment of the democracy that important sectors of the Latin American population have". (Páez, en Lizcano F.F., 2006: 55)

President Chávez's, in inaugural speech as president, in January 10 of 2007,[22] is an example of the main ideas about the social imaginary of the continuation of his project. Utilizing some elements of the *lexicometric* analysis that Víctor Armony[23] propose for analyze the political speech, previously,

[22] The speech of the president Hugo Chávez Frías, in January 10 of 2007, when he took office as president was transcribed by Mónica Chalbaud.

[23] The elements of this *lexicometric* method are exposed in the work of Víctor Armony that titles: "*L'analyse lexicométrique du discourse politique: porte d'entrée pour etudier le significants sociaux"*,

in another text (Medina, en Chávez R.A., 2008: 45) we have presented it in a detailed way showing especially the references to characters such as Bolivar, Jesus Christ, and to concepts as socialism and democracy, but all this is related to the equality of rights for everyone through a government that could be able to offer education, health and social security.

It is important in Latin America to point out the utopia of democratic social change linked to the matter of religion, for in a traditional way, the dominant interpretation of the ecclesiastic hierarchy has emphasized only in the hope of a better life in the afterlife —relegating to second term the Christians' responsibility over the equality and justice in the present world- and to accept the wrongs and sufferings as the will of God. The vision expressed by president Chávez includes the explicit connection of the Christians with the firsts Christian communities' socialism (during the firsts three centuries of our time, the believers in Jesus Christ used to put their personal belongings for the common use) and the strong punishment that was given to corruption. In this sense, using the words of the Christian gospel, the kingdom of God is constructed in this world with an explicit commitment of the believers to fight against the social inequality.

In the Latin American chronology of the last decades, what took place first was the change from the authoritarian military dictatorships to the so called democratic models, by understanding these at least in its fundamental condition of having rulers elected through votes: "the conditions to make possible the developing of the imaginary and the democratic culture in the zone present many national variations, but they have in common the negative value that is made about the civilian and military authoritarianism" (Tejeda, 2005: 95). However, the practice of this method restricted or disappointed poor democracies because civil governments continued to have the same traditional authoritarian attitude, favoring the wealth's concentration in a few hands. Against the failure of this kind of fragile democracies, the imaginary of social transformation strongly appeared, but using the same methods of the democratic liberalism.

Instead of the violent reaction of the armed fight against the military dictatorships, the current citizens' fight is not exclusive of the working class but it is being transformed into a wide front that demands the right to the utopia by peaceful ways in the political arena. The new governments that are emerging are not the result of coups nor do they practice their power in a

in Corten, 2006: 117-137. Armony focus himself precisely in the presidential speeches as objects of study and do his analysis en in the case of Néstor Kirchner.

totalitarian way but through the democratic institutions. The alternative of this power is founded in the failure of the promises of the neo-liberal model of free market; the North American domination is increasingly manifested in Latin America as a project in decadence and the necessity of national autonomies also increases; the growth of poverty and inequality facing the minorities that have gotten so rich in scandalous ways is perhaps the main criticism that can be done to the long lived capitalism and for it, the imagination has projected a different world that is only possible through the support of the majority of the population.

# Chapter III
# Right and Left in Latin America

*"The time of the rifles has passed"*
(Hugo Chávez, en *RFI*, 14-VII-2008)

## A Plural Scenario

Having in consideration the permanence of the ideological confrontation between the right and the left, the elections in Latin America held during 2006 and 2007 have shown a scenario that seem to confirm the differences between both options, even though the existent confusion in many cases in national level and despite of what we have called ideological landslides.

In Latin America, the new movement to the left wing with democratically elected governments appeared with the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998, who was ratified in the mega-elections of 2000 and once again by the Venezuelans in 2006 for a new period of 6 more years and one more time in 2012. It was then followed by the triumph of Lula da Silva in Brazil in 2002 and he was ratified in the ballot boxes for a new period of four more years in the presidency in 2006. The victory of Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay in 2004, through a socialist left coalition which put him in the government from 2005 to 2010, was also significant. In this last year, the same left Broad Front won again the elections and put José Mujica in the presidency, a fomer guerrilla fighter, who became maybe the best president in Latinamerica. On the other side, though his left ideology can be put in question, we can also mention the triumph of Martín Torrijos in the same year 2004 for the Democratic Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Democrático)*, who, at

least, is differentiates himself a lot from his predecessor in the government, the right-winged government of Mireya Moscoso.[24]

With these background, the Latin American scenario was presented during January 2006, which started with Manuel Zelaya sworn in as President of Honduras, who had won the elections of November 2005, whose scenario had offered nothing new to the country in a structural level for it has been the continuation of the two-party system lived during the last decades. The Liberal Party of Honduras (*Patrido Liberal de Honduras:* PLH) certainly won, that from the ideological point of view can be situated more to the left of the loser, the National Party of Honduras (*Partido Nacional de Honduras:* PNH), but both in their continuing alternations in the presidency have not signified, as a whole, more than the representation of the local oligarchies in alliance with the government of the United States, even though the new government of Zavala started to distinguish itself with new proposals.

However, this scenario openly contrasted with the new President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, in the same month of January, who was elected with a voting level (53.7%) that allowed him to define his permanency with that result of December 18th of 2005. He had two principal characteristics that turned him into a left symbol (though there were more radical groups than his): the first was his indigenous origins that linked him during all his previous life to numerous popular movements demanding their rights; the second was the explicit ideology of his ideas pointed out in the very name of the party that made him candidate, the Movement to Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo: MAS).*

On another note, during the same month of January the triumph of Michelle Bachelet took place in the second electoral round of Chile, which turned into the continuation of the governmental presence of the Chilean Socialist Party *(Partido Socialista Chileno)* in the executive power (replacing the president Ricardo Lagos, of the same party), that continues to represent some left principles, though, in the perspective of the national intern agreement *(the so called concertación)*, both inside the country and out of it are recognized as a very moderated tendency. There are those who want to deny the PSCH its left characteristic for being precisely in the range of a special agreement called *Concertacion* (Spanish word meaning a consensus) to reject the Pinochet dictatorship in an outlook that a lot recognize as neo-liberal; however, it is enough to observe the candidacies that Bachelet had to defeat

[24] In Panama, they had a government of the right with Mireya Moscoso (1999-2004); a center-left tendency with Martín Torrijos (2004-2009), and today an extreme right wing with Ricardo Martinelli (2009-2014).

both within her party as well as the rest of the parties to recognize that the government she represented was not a right-wing one: "In Chile, where the Parties for Democracy (*Partidos para la Democracia) the concertación* was constructed since 1990 inside the paradigm of the *neo-liberal gobernability* and where the most combative tendencies of the Socialist Party have a rough battle to preserve its identity an its historical objectives, it is necessary to say, first, that its presidential candidate was Michelle Bachelet —and not Soledad Alvear, who represents the most recalcitrant right inside this alliance, and second, that Bachellet defeated the ultra-right candidate in the second round of the presidential election, in 2006, thanks to the support of the left sectors strange to the *Concertación*". (2008: 2)

We must stress, on the contrary, the cases of Costa Rica, Perú and México, where, even though an alternative left did not get to the executive power in the final result of each country, is important to consider the electoral power that the opposition had in the presidential elections and the significant of its strength in the result of the quarrel as in the new balance of the political actors.

In Costa Rica, during the February elections, it was Ottón Solís with his party *Acción Ciudadana* who broke the current traditional dichotomy of a bipartisan system of previous decades between the National Liberation Party *(Partido de Liberación Nacional:* PLN) and the Social Christian Unity Party (*Partido de la Unidad Social Cristiana:* PUSC); these parties only alternated the power from term to term at the end of their respective administrations; the results between Oscar Arias (who at the end was declared president, with a minimum difference) and Ottón Solís were so tied that it was necessary to solve the decision with a vote by vote counting.

In Perú, Ollanta Humala scared the traditional dominant groups when he won the first round for the presidency in April, defeating both the candidate of the current government —the president Alejandro Toledo supported the candidate Lourdes Flores, who in the end only achieved the third place in the first round— and the traditional moderated left of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana:* APRA); for the second round in the month of June, all the groups of the right made an alliance to prevent Ollanta's triumph and with that they were able to lead Alan García —who had ended in the second place in the first electoral round— to become president for the second time (he had had the charge from 1985 to 1990). After Alan García, Ollanta Humala finally got the presidency of Peru in 2011, defeating Keiko Fujimori in a run-off voting.

In México, even though an alternation of the power had already occurred in the 2000 when the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional:* PAN) conquered the presidency after 71 years of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional:* PRI) in the government, the elections of July 2006 were barely tied (and with several versions of fraud) between two contradictory options: the right of Felipe Calderón (who was finally declared president by the electoral court), and the left represented by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, of the Democratic Revolution Party (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática:* PRD), who was promising radical reforms to the neo-liberal economic model applied during several decades; it was the first time that the Mexican left received so many votes, and the electoral force of the PRD excelled the level of votes of PRI itself.

The elections in Colombia in May offered a definitive result that did not need a second ballot: President Álvaro Uribe, who had been able through the coercion and the corruption of some legislators, to amend the constitution to permit the reelection, he conquered a comfortable triumph for his group "Colombia First" (*Primero Colombia)* with a 62,2% of the votes. This country has had, in past decades, a traditional bipartisan system between liberals and conservatives that shared the presidency, but what was new in the 2006 was that the Liberal Party of Colombia (*Partido Liberal de Colombia:* PLC) —part of the traditional bipartisan system— only got 11.84% of the votes, while a new group with a progressive left ideology, the Alternative Democratic Pole (*Polo Democrático Alternativo:* PDA), proposed Carlos Gaviria, who occupied the second place in the citizens' preference with a 22% of the votes. After Uribe's second term, the new president on August 2010 was Juan Manuel Santos, who has been minister of National Defense, continuing the right wing of his predecessor.

In this whole scenario, the Latin American electoral processes of 2006 and 2007 had as result a majority of governments with left ideology projects, looking in some cases for new alternatives of development against the neo-liberal system.

Both Brazil (first and second round during October) and Venezuela (December) ratified their presidents: in one side Lula da Silva, of the Workers Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores:* PT) who had already surprised with his victory in 2002 —after trying three consecutive times—, covered with an image of committed worker with the social causes and who defeated once again the Brazilian Socialist Democratic Party *(Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira:* PSDB) to obtain a second mandate; on the other hand, Hugo Chávez, who had already gotten to power in Venezuela in 1998 and having achieved the

approval of a new constituent and surviving a coup in the 2002, he managed to be reelected in December 2006 and he sworn in on January 10th of 2007 with an overwhelming victory over his right-winged adversary, Manuel Rosales, to govern Venezuela until 2013.

In Ecuador's case, with the elections in October, Rafael Correa with his clearly anti-neoliberal positions confronted in a second round one of the richest men in Ecuador, Alvaro Novoa, whith an extreme right-wing ideology, saying, for example, that should he win he would stop political relations with Venezuela and Cuba. Though Correra ended below Noboa in the first ballot, his definitive triumph in the second round broke with a tradition of numerous corrupted and scandalous governments that always were in close alliance with the United States and the international financier organisms; his proposals are localized in left tendencies that are radically opposed to the right's neo-liberal model.

Finally, in the 2006, we have to point out the case of Nicaragua, where Daniel Ortega, from the Sandinist Front for the National Liberation (*Frente Sandinista para la Liberación Nacional:* FSLN) won again the presidency after three consecutive defeats (1990, 1996, 2000): he had governed the country after the triumph of the Sandinist Revolution at the front of the junta and then he was elected president in 1984 but in the middle of a terrible counter revolutionary war supported and armed by the United States; he have lost the elections of 1990 leaving the presidency in hands of Violeta Barrios. He was postulated again as candidate of the FSLN for the presidency in the next two periods but he lost both of them, until the new process of November 2006 when he achieved the victory. Even though much of Ortegas' ideology has been modified since 1990 by moderating his positions, he stills represents a left ideology and he clearly showed his international alliances during the ceremony of protest by having as special guest the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez.

During the next year, we also witnessed a significant change in the electoral process of Guatemala in September 2007, where, in spite of a close approach of both left and right parties, the dispute was centered in two candidates: Álvaro Colóm, postulated by the National Unity of Hope (*Unidad Nacional de la Esperanzal:* UNE), of social-democratic tendencies in his principles and with the fight against poverty through social measures as its flag, against retired General Otto Pérez Molina, of the Patriotic Party (*Partido Patriota:* PP), who proposed a hard line of police and military control and repression as the only way to bring order to the country. As neither of the candidates had 50% of the votes in the first ballot, a second round for No-

vember the 4th 2007 was set, when Álvaro Colóm, who had already participated in two previous elections with the support in 1999 by the former guerrilla movement of the National Revolutionary Guatemalan Unity (*Unidad Revolucionria Nacional Guatemalteca: URNG),* won with 52,81% of the votes over Otto Pérez. This retired general, having lost in 2007, could prevail in the 2011 elections and became president of the country.

At last, the 2007 presidential elections in Argentina gave the victory to Cristina Fernández, the wife of president Kirchner, in a line of continuity of the moderate left thought that had success in the recovery of the country after a terrible economic crisis that had exploited in December 2001. Cristina Fernández, with his coalition Alliance for Victory (*Alianza para la Victoria)* and with 44.92% of the votes defeated the more radical candidate, Elisa Carrió, proposed by the Civic Coalition Confederation (*Confederación Coalición Cívica).* Although the new President of Argentina represents, fundamentally, the same project as Néstor Kirchner, there is no doubt about the distance her political career has taken since many years ago, which gives her her own signature with numerous innovations that will continue to deviate from the neoliberal models of Carlos Menem. Néstor Kirchner died and Cristina became a widow and was reelected for a second term in office in October 2011.

From some basic programmatic postulates that have defined the parties that are in the government for its national realities and international environment of the contemporary world, a differentiation of positions between left and right (having in count that each thought includes new tendencies) can be tested in Latin America, even though every reductionism risks a certain degree of simplification that can cloud the particular analysis.

The right is distinguished by the impulse given to the politics of economic growth, considering that the "invisible hand" of the market (Adam Smith's inspiration) sooner or latter would spread the social benefits for the entire population and, in that sense, they make alliances with the most important economic groups both national and international, and propose measures to attract international investments; its social policy is characterized overall by benefit programs focused on the less favored, with the object of avoiding social explosions. Therefore, in the international frame, they use to have a subordinated relationship with the financial organism and, in particular, to the pressure of the United States. As Allan Touraine says, "the right-wing parties, in relation to the United States, are not defined but by their submission to this power" (Touraine, 2005: 27); in the particular case of the Latin American context, several right governments have done

anything but to support, in its moment, the continental project of free trade (called Free Trade Area of the Americas: FTAA) or the particular projects of bilateral alliances between the United States and each country.

By its part, the Latin American left (despite the number of its differences) has always manifested its position of linking itself to the so called popular mass —against the power of the big businessmen—, by trying to resist the measures of the adjustment programs of the neo-liberal model that has dominated in the region since the 80's; in particular, in relation to the United States, it has permanently given a confrontation with its economical domination policies or military intervention, trying to conserve at least a national autonomy. In this way, the left has opposed to the FTAA or to the bilateral treaties of free trade, that only signify the opening of boundaries to foreign products without having in count the national production nor the domestic market.

In this way, from this basic postulates, the new leaders of 2006-2007 —summed to the results in others elections in left, right and center ideological positions like Uruguay (left in 2005 and 2010) and Paraguay (left in 2008 but with an impeachment process like a coup d'état in 2012) and El Salvador (left 2009), Panama (2004 shifting to the right in 2009) and the Dominican Republic (center position in 2008) in later years— can be accommodated in the next way in our analysis:

| RIGHT | CENTER | LEFT |
|---|---|---|
| México (shifting to the center with the return of the PRI in 2012)<br>Colombia | Honduras[25] (shifting to the right after the *coup d'état* in 2009)<br>Costa Rica<br>Perú (shifting to the left with Ollanta Humala in 2011)<br>Guatemala (shifting to the right with Otto Pérez in 2011) | Bolivia, Chile, (shifting to the right with Sebastian Piñera in 2010)<br>Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua[26] |

[25] George Couffignal (2007: 10) makes a division between right (México and Colombia), center (Honduras), center-left (Costa Rica, Perú, Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua) and a radical left (Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia).

[26] In a similar way, Ignacio Ramonet (Manière de voir, 2007: 4) also makes the following selection: "Since the victory of Hugo Chávez to the presidency of Venezuela in 1998, the results have led several countries to the election or reelection of left candidates or center-left: Néstor Kirchner

This arrangement can be to thin and slippery because it is necessary to make lots of shades; the countries in each group do not form alliances automatically or blocks with international presence, nor have common positions in all topics. However, the distinction of ideologies is important for the political situation represents something new in the Latin American sphere for the fact that many left leaders are in the government as a product of an electoral process. It would be enough remember the fall of the governments of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala (1954) and Salvador Allende in Chile (1973) to know that, in the twentieth century, the electoral democracy has its limits well defined as much by the elites of power as well as the local military groups and also the government of the United States. For that, the transition to the twentieth century is the beginning of an increasing left in the frame of the electoral democracy.

In another note, the cases of Perú, Costa Rica, Honduras were very special from an ideological point of view since they were in a position that we can catalogue as center-left due to their practical performace. Oscar Arias, president of Costa Rica, has represented traditionally the liberals of his country, always opposed to Christian democracy, but during the electoral process of 2006, his principal opponent was Ottón Solís. By his side, Alan García was differentiated both from the right (the candidate Lourdes Flores) and from the radical and nationalist left of Ollanta Humala; his party, the APRA (also called "Peruvian Aprista Party"), in addition, maintains ideologically the tradition of Haya de la Torre.[27] For these reasons, we had to place both in the political center. In the internal case of Honduras, it can be clearly said that in the last decades that the national party represented a right wing ideology and that the liberal party (Zelaya's party then) could be situated in the left; but the Zelaya government approached the left governments of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba by requesting its admission into the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas; however, both parties have responded in

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in Argentina, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay, Martín Torrijos in Panamá, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Michelle Bachelet in Chile, and even Alan García in Perú, whose party, the APRA is member of the socialist international". He does not mention the case of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, whose triumph occurred later in relation to the edition of the magazine.

[27] Víctor Manuel de la Torre (1895), even though he clearly differentiated himself from the Marxist thought of Mariátegui and from the orthodox Leninism of the 20's, he clearly kept a left ideology by raising the fight against poverty and the underdevelop and also by supporting different popular and freedom movements.

a traditional way to different groups of the Honduran economic elite that interchange the political power periodically.

Anyhow, the Latin American calendar presented to us eleven presidential elections[28] in 2006 and two in 2007. The cases of the first semester of 2006 have been analyzed previously (Delgado *et al.*, 2007) and for that reason a brief synthesis will be presented in this book; here it will be found, with more details, the countries whose elections occurred in the second semester of 2006 and the two of 2007: they offer us several electoral scenarios with the triumph of diverse ideologies, but with a numerical domination of those called leftist governments.

**Presidential Elections**

| COUNTRY | PRESIDENT | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| Honduras | Manuel Zelaya | Nov 27 2005/ Sworn in: January 2006 |
| Bolivia | Evo Morales | Dic. 18 2005/ Sworn in: January 2006 |
| Chile | Michelle Bachelet | 2nd round: Jan 15 2006 |
| Costa Rica | Oscar Arias | Feb 5 2006 |
| Perú | Alan García | Apr 9/June 4 2006 (1st and 2nd round) |
| Colombia | Álvaro Uribe | May 28 2006 |
| México | Felipe Calderón | July 2 2006 |
| Brazil | Inazio Lula da Silva | Oct 2006 (1st and 2nd round) |
| Ecuador | Rafael Correa | Oct 2006 (1st and 2nd round) |
| Nicaragua | Daniel Ortega | Nov 23 2006 |

[28] In the continental sphere, it is always important to mention the case of Haiti that also had its electoral process in February the 7th of 2006. The analysis of this country is not included in this workt, for we took in a restrictive way the concept of Latin America from the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries.

| COUNTRY | PRESIDENT | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| Venezuela | Hugo Chávez | Dec 3 2006 |
| Guatemala | Álvaro Colóm | Sept and Nov 2007 (1st and 2nd round) |
| Argentina | Cristina Fernández | Oct 28 2007 |

*Source: author's investigation*

In this sense, it has to be affirmed that something new is emerging in Latin America, although it is not an homogenous tendency nor can its permanence be guaranteed for a long term. An analysis points out the big difference of our region with what occurs in Europe where the institutional lefts have conformed themselves by negotiating a triumphant capitalism wanting only to give it a more human face or wanting to turn it into something less fierce or savage; we must pay attention "in this moments in Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, in which the radical and democratic left has known how to connect with the majority of the citizens, giving voice and power to social sectors that during centuries have been in a marginalization that was seen as natural. Proof that this displacement of social prominence has been produced is the hysterical screaming organized against Chávez, Evo Morales or Rafael Correa for whom a voice never rose to its least capacity against the misery and for the chronic unfairness of the Venezuelan, Bolivian and Ecuadorian societies". (Fajardo, 2008: 28)

# Chapter IV
# Towards the Right

Starting from the definitions of the party in power itself and from the position of the country's president in relation to the fundamental postulates that divide currently the vision of several Latin Americans, we start with the right wing ideology, where we clearly find the governments of Colombia (2006) and Mexico (2006).[29] The traditional principles of the party that postulated Álvaro Uribe and made him win in a resounding way just like the party that postulated Felipe Calderón and made him win in a polemic and controversial way, talk to us about the right's traditional postulates.

## 4.1. COLOMBIA: tough hand's reelection

The Republic of Colombia had a population of 44.4 million inhabitants and its name vindicates the man that led the discovering of America, Christopher Columbus. Unfortunately in the Latin American imaginary, the country's name has been ordinarily linked to the production and distribution of drugs, in such level that when talking about drugs in a determined region we say that such region is "like Colombia." In the other hand, if the revolutionary guerrilla movements, like the openly militarized dictatorships,

[29] Apart from these two countries, without a doubt El Salvador was also clearly placed in the right with its president Antonio Saca (2005-2009), until the 2009 elections, where the former revolutionary movement, the FMLN, has been the second electoral force and won the presidency with its candidate Mauricio Funes. In Mexico, six years later, the PAN left the presidency after the lost election in 2012. In Colombia, there was a continuation of ideological right in 2011 with the new president Juan Manuel Santos, the former minister of Defense of Alvaro Uribe

seemed to be part of the past, in Colombia the evident case of the FARC's guerrilla takes place as a real power inside the country that has controlled territories under its power. It can be said that it is the only Latin American country where a special situation is articulated between three powers: the official governmental power supported by the United States (with countless paramilitary groups), the power of the revolutionary guerrilla groups with whom has not been achieved a definitive peace process, and the power of the druglords in multiple regional, national and international expressions. With that, this population with an official average income of 2.020 dollars per capita a year, had ratified (with a 62% of the ballot), in the elections of May 28th 2006, the previous president Alvaro Uribe (2002-2006) —who has also been mayor of Medellín and two times senator of the republic— for a second term of office in the executive power from 2006 to 2010.

Drugs are certainly one of the biggest evils on earth, but its production is very well located; there are countries such as Afghanistan or Colombia that stand in this matter. Alberto Lugo, in his university thesis on this issue exposes the situation: "The growing of this illegal industry in the country has been much accelerated, and during the last 30 years of Colombia's recent history, its influence in the economic, social and political field has been crucial. The drug business has contributed to the aggravation of the domestic armed conflict, to increasing rates of violence and common criminality; and in this way has helped reduce the country's economic growth and increase the rates of poverty and marginalization in which Colombians live. In the same way, drug business has marked the country's international agenda, leaving little space for the negotiation of other issues of national interest". (Lugo, 2005)

On the other side, Colombian guerrilla movements are one of the oldest in Latin America; its origins, as in many countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, etc., are attached to the impossibility of changes through the electoral way. In Colombia the historical origin comes from the murder of the liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, in April 9th 1948. Two of the most important expressions of the guerrillas in the country were the Armed Revolucionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) created in 1964 and the most important in the beginning of the twentieth century; and the Army of National Liberation (ELN), created in 1965. Father Camilo Torres (1928-1966, liberation theologian) was part of this movement in an ephemeral way during the last moments of his life. Although several peace agreements have been developed with many groups of the guerrilla, the

armed conflict continues, in a situation in which entire regions proclaim themselves autonomous. By the same token, the United States and the different Colombian governments constantly accuse the guerrilla of being involved with the drug business to finance their military activities, even when the rebel organizations have always denied it.

From the drug production and from the guerrilla movements, the government of the United States has get progressively involved with the Colombian governments, with a permanent alliance that justifies all its economical, political and military actions through the combat to the narcotraffic and the fight against terrorism. This alliance created what today is known as *Plan Colombia*. This was presented in September 1999, during the government of President Andrés Pastrana Arango: a huge American inversion was announced which had as declared objective the strengthening of the Colombian economy through economical projects, democracy's promotion, preservation of the public order and frontal combat against the drug lords and the guerrilla. In this way, the formal intentions were to achieve peace and stop the armed conflict, give to the economy a new impulse and put an end to the production and distribution of narcotics; for this, the American government started in 2000 with an official contribution of 1.319 million dollars,[30] proposing that the Colombian government contribute with another amount and that, also, a fund would be created with contributions of multiple governments of the world that wanted to act for this cause. This last strategy did not succeed because, internationally, it was clearly perceived that all the economic help was focused exclusively to support a bigger presence of the United States both in the country as in the region.

With all these determinant circumstances of the historical context, the electoral process in Colombia keeps expressing the continuation of the ruling political elites; however, a notable change exist in the 2006 results: the traditional couple between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, that have exchanged the presidency among themselves, in the successive presidential terms, looked about finished. On that occasion, it was not the Conservative who was disputing the presidency with the Liberal Party but

[30] In the year 2002, the American Congress officially passed a new amount for *Plan Colombia*: $349.404 million dollars, and declared to the FARC and to the ELN as narcoterrorist organizations, guilty of all the violence in Colombia. In that same year, the USA approved another 31 million dollars towards, especially, the fight against terror, and in the year 2003, the support to *Plan Colombia* had another 526 million dollars. In that same year the total amount given by the USA to *Plan Colombia* was already of $2.225.686 million dollars (Lugo, 2005).

progressive proposals of Carlos Gaviria Díaz, with his *"Polo Democrático Alternativo"*, who obtained 22,04% of the ballot. The victory of Alvaro Uribe Vélez, in May 28th 2006, through the *"Primero Colombia"* coalition, was impossible to object with 62,2% of the votes, even though it was stained by all the bribes that he gave to the legislators during his presidency that approved the constitutional modification to be able to be reelected. It is surprising, however, that the traditional bipartisan system between liberal and conservatives was ended, for the Colombian Liberal Party, which postulated Horacio Serpe Uribe, only obtained the third place with 11,84% of the votes.

The other presidential candidates did not get an important place because of their percentages of votes. It is remarkable, however, the candidacy of Antanas Mockus Sivickas, an inquiring and extravagant man but with a lot of initiatives always since he was mayor of Bogotá, because in the level of his carrier to the presidency did not obtain more than the 1,24% of the votes through his *Movimiento Alianza Social Indígena.* The rest of the candidates (Enrique Parejo, for the *Movimiento Reconstrucción Democrática Nacional;* Alvaro Leyva for the *Movimiento Nacional de Reconciliación;* Carlos Arturo Rincón, for the *Movimiento Comunal y Comunitario de Colombia)* did not even achieve the 0,5% of the votes.

Nevertheless, in all this context of the Colombian ballot, we have to take into account those who really won: those who did not vote: "the decision of the biggest number of voters was not to participate in the elections. The results show that only 7.3 million voted for Uribe and his controversial policy of democratic security; 4.2 million voters voted against him (including those who wrote the name of a different candidate). But the abstention increased: from 48.4% in 2002, to a high 54.9% in 2006. But 14.6 million Colombians did not vote or left the ballot papers empty. The abstention grew from 48.4% in 2002 to 54.9 in 2006, according to Inter Press Service. With that, the critics point out that Uribe will rule with the support of only 27.5% of the voters of the country". (LADB. *NotiSur*, June, 2006)

Uribe's second term started in August 7th 2006. In this sense, there is no doubt about the consolidation of his power in the interior through an image of hard hand, firm negotiator and unconditional ally of the United States; as a complement he promised to efficiently reduce the country's poverty. He had obtained an important victory in 2005 when he persuaded the congress to change the Colombian Constitution to be able to get reelected, although through an arranged process.

The Colombian innovation is the proposal of *Polo Democrático Alternativo* with the 22% of the votes, which did not have the hope of challenging Uribe's triumph but it represented, on the one hand, the biggest number of votes for a candidate of the left in the country's history and, on the other, the final point of the traditional bipartisan system between liberals and conservatives that comes since the nineteenth century. This last thing is not only a consequence of the displacement of the Liberal Party to third place but also because Uribe created his own party based in his own personality and ruling style, separating himself from the conservatives.

Uribe's government looks like having a favorable political perspective in the interior of the country mainly because of the majority's support that he has in the congress, to the solid support that the United States gives to him in resources and political and military help; his image has been politically strengthened; the national growth shows itself in the positive numbers in the macroeconomic level and, also, during the 2007 and 2008 were achieved both the polemic strikes given to the guerrilla[31] and the liberation of some hostages, especially the case of Ingrid Betancourt.[32] But the country's problems continue to be gigantic: an imbalanced economy, poverty, subsistence of the guerrilla, more than 30,000 paramilitaries with exclusive areas of control, the druglords with their national and extraterritorial nets, the governmental corruptions (included Uribe itself by the way he achieved the constitution's modification in 2005 to make possible his reelection), the hostages of the guerrilla and paramilitaries, etc. With all this, is not probable that the only strategy of having lots of economic resources to continue increasing and improving the Army with the help of the United States will be enough to have better counts for the population in the remaining years of the government.

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[31] In March 3rd 2008, Colombian militaries invaded Ecuadorian territory to exterminate a group of the FARC guerrilla, were the leader Raúl Reyes was present, the second in command of this organization. This bloody incursion settled a terrible background about preventive strokes of a government against its enemies, without respect for the national sovereignty of the neighboring countries.

[32] It is calculated that in Colombia there's approximately 3000 hostages: 700 in the hands of FARC, and 2,200 in the hands of paramilitary groups. Ingrid Betancourt was liberated back in July of 2008 by the Colombian military, using the Red Cross and Telesur as a standard and, according to a Swiss radio, by paying them 20 million dollars.

## 4.2. MÉXICO: rise of the Left but the triumph of the Right

México is in the same Latin American dynamic where new political alternatives are arising from the electoral processes. If it is true that we can find the background of rebel groups that questioned the government power during the 60's and 70's —and even the barely symbolic guerrilla of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) in 1994—, a process of social conflict resolution in the political arena has been consolidated, where the elections are a fundamental part to define the diverse positions of federal, state and municipal power.

In this context, in the first place, the panorama of the diverse stages of the Mexican transition to democracy is shown; next, some particularities of the first alternation government of President Fox are undertaken, to finish with an evaluation of the controversial elections of 2006. The final result of this last ballot shows the confrontation of two opposite projects, similar to the political scenario in other Latin American countries, where in a confused an unclear way the victory of Felipe Calderón was imposed to continue the presence of the PAN in the presidency for six more years. If the final result clearly places the country in the right wing, in an intern level it can be certainly affirmed that the left had never achieved a bigger amount of votes in its favor; for that, there are those who conclude that in Mexico, in the general Latin American context of the biggest impact of the left ideologies, "if we examine in detail it is not an exception, the balance is that a turn to the left continues on". (Carlsen, 2006)

### The stages of transition

The traditional diagram of parties that we lived until the political reform of 1979 only counted with four political organizations legally recognized, but where the predominance of just one of them was the case.

The Revolutionary National Party *(PNR: Partido Nacional Revolucionario)* was born in 1929 by initiative of Plutarco E. Calles as an effort to centralize the political power; afterwards, this party was transformed into the Party of Mexican Revolution *(PRM: Partido de la Revolución Mexicana)* in 1938, during the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas including the official participation of the rural sector and of the working class, and finally it became into the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1946, during the presidential terms from President Manuel Avila Camacho to President Miguel Aleman. This

State party remained hegemonic in an almost absolute way, winning all the presidential elections, all the governors until the decade of the 80's, and dominating with absolute majority in the Congress until 1997.

The only real opposition party during several decades certainly was the National Action Party (PAN: *Partido Acción Nacional)*, founded in 1939, and that competed for the presidency in all the elections, with an exception in 1976 when José López Portillo wanted to travel around the country as the single candidate with no electoral opponent. Since the 40's, the PAN could win some electoral districts but its deputies were always minority both in the Congress and in the local legislations. PAN's ideology notably contrasted with PRI's in all this period and did not have big electoral achieves recognized until the case of the governor in Baja California Norte in the 80's, when it started to turn into a real opposition party with real aspirations to dispute the power.

Out of this traditional confrontation between PRI and PAN, we also find another two organizations: the Popular Socialist Party (PPS: *Partido Popular Socialista)*, that originally was born just as Popular Party (PP: *Partido Popular)* in 1948, and then in 1961 the word Socialist was annexed; and the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution *(PARM: Partido Autentico de la Revolucion Mexicana)*, came about in 1954, in times of the President Ruiz Cortínez, principally composed by characters that had directly participated in the revolutionary movement in the beginning of the century. Although the PP inaugurated its political life in 1952 postulating Vicente Lombardo Toledano as candidate to the presidency —he had been its founder and ideologist— and despite its radical ideology manifested with the adjective "socialist" in 1961, it lived in a real pact with the PRI until the 1988 juncture, when it supported the Engineer Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the National Democratic Front *(Frente Democrático Nacional: FDN)* against the PRI's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Something similar happened with the PARM, in the way that, since its origin until the elections of 1988, it always was summed to the PRI's candidates to the presidency of the Republic, giving up postulating candidates of itself.

The party system in that whole period resulted in general in the same outline: a permanent political clash between PRI and PAN, where the first one was always the explicit support of the PPS and of the PARM. These two parties, always small in its militants and in their legislative positions, played the role of a group with the intent of representing a pluralist party system, despite the contrasting behavior that had the Popular Party during the 40's

with the leadership of Vicente Leobardo Toledano, when at the beginning promoted an opposition candidate in the presidential ballot of 1952.

The country's political situation named in 1991 by Mario Vargas LLosa as the "perfect dictatorship" and called by Carlos Salinas de Gortari as "a single party hegemony" started to suffer transformations through what the analysts have mentioned like "the transition to democracy", a still polemic term in its results during the twenty first century.

The historical process of this transition until the moment that the PRI lost the Republic's presidency in the year 2000 has four clearly distinguishable moments: the students movement in 1968, the political reform of 1977, the controversial elections in 1988 when the oppositions party were allied under the National Democratic Front (FDN) and the legislative elections in 1997 when the PRI lost the absolute majority in the House of Representatives and the PRD won the Federal District.

The student's movement of 1968 emerged as something circumstantial in the month of July in a fight between México City's high schools number five and number two. On July 26, two different manifestations crashed: that of the *Federacion Nacional de Estudiantes Técnicos,* which protested because of the intervention of the police (named *granaderos* in México City*)* and the other one called by the *Central Nacional de Estudiantes Democraticos* and the *Juventud Comunista*, which wanted to celebrate the July 26th anniversary of the capture of the Moncada barracks in Cuba. Both manifestations were suppressed by the police of the Federal District, which motivated the students to unify themselves to protest. The governmental suppression increased even more, which caused the movement's expansion to the metropolitan zone of the Federal District and to diverse universities from other states, with the 6 basic demands.[33] The movement showed a good coordination since August 10th when the National Strike Council *(CNH: Consejo Nacional de la Huelga)*, that was supposed to represent 150 thousand students, was presented to the public opinion. The authoritarian nature of the regime was showed in the President's Gustavo Díaz Ordaz hard hand who got to the point to take militarily the UNAM installations and ordered the violent suppression of the student manifestation in the *Tlatelolco Plaza* in the Federal District, on October 2nd 1968.

[33] The six demanded points were: 1) Freedom to political prisoners. 2) The destitution of the Generals Luis Cueto and Raúl Mendiola and Leutenant Colonel Armando Frías. 3) Elimination of the *granaderos* (the police corp in México City) corps. 4) Derogation of the articles 145 and 145 bis of the Penal Code (social dissolution crime). 5) Compensation of the dead and woulded families. 6) Determine the responsibilities in the repression made by the authorities (police, army, *granaderos).*

The political significance of this movement has been analyzed by numerous authors in perspectives that certainly overflow the 6 points of the demands to focus in the criticism to the authoritarian regime and the search for democracy. This student organization "has, among many goals, the democratization of the current political system" (Ramírez, 1969, 24)… for "the democracy in Mexico is just a concept, one more form, because politics are done at the margins of the popular majorities, of their aspirations, interests and demands" (Ramírez, 1969: 42). "This movement is the expression of the profound inequalities in the distribution of wealth…". (Ramírez, 1969: 69)

The main fact post 68 was the rise of numerous political groups of left and right but wanting to participate legally in the country's political life with positions of power: Workers' Socialist Party (PST: *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores)*, Workers' Mexican Party (PMT: *Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores)*, Democrat Mexican Party (PDM: *Partido Demócrata Mexicano)*, Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR: *Partido Socialista Revolucionario)*, Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT: *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores)*, etc. The Mexican Communist Party (PCM: *Partido Comunista Mexicano)* itself, that had been created in 1919 and that had had a clandestine life in many moments of the country's history, started to act more openly in the public life without having, as the other four (PRI, PAN, PPS, PARM), a legally recognized register.

A meaningful action was the fact that the PAN refused in 1976 to present a candidate for the Republic's presidency. Nevertheless, the PRI's candidate, José López Portillo, made a fake campaign, with no opposition, in the entire country and won formally with a high number of votes.

The second fact in the Mexican political transition was the 1977 political reform proposed by Jesús Reyes Heroles during López Portillo's government. The reform opened the possibility to diverse political groups to obtain a legal register as parties but conditioned to the results in an electoral process. The 1979 legislative elections were the reform's prove of fire because the PST, the PDM and the PCM had obtained their conditioned register. The law established that they could obtain the definitive register if in the national ballot they obtain at least 1.5% of the votes. In that process, the PST and the PDM were able, with difficulties, to overpass the 1.5% while the PCM had the 3%. With that, these three political parties obtained their definitive register, though, in the correlation of political forces, practically nothing really changed for the PRI —supported by the PARM and the PPS— and the PAN continued to be the principal contradiction but with a permanency of the overwhelming PRI's politics in the House of Representatives (*Cámara de Diputados)*. In this legisla-

tive organ, the reform had extended the number of deputies by district to 300 called *uninominales* and, in a complementary way, there could be 100 more elected deputies from the minority parties named *plurinominales*. Under José Woldenber's conception, "through the system's opening to the political trends which were kept artificially marginalized, and thanks to the plurality injection in the House of Representatives, this transformation opened the door to change and constructed a channel to start modifying the authoritarian regime into democracy". (Woldenberg, 2006: 25)

A bigger political pluralism had been achieved, though in practice it continued to be just a one party system. In 1979, the PRI was unstoppable for it won 294 of the 300 districts (the PAN only obtained 4), and 104 seats were left to be distributed between the other 6 parties.

In the middle of the terrible economical crisis of the 80's, the Mexican political life did not changed as far as the forces correlation model: the real and formal party opposition already existed but the PRI maintained the absolute majority in the House of Representatives. In the 1982 presidential elections, for example, the PRI won 299 of the 300 *uninominales* districts and left 101 to be distributed among the other parties. In that year, the PRT was officially incorporated to the political struggle.

A similar model continued in the 1985 legislative elections: the PRI won 289 *uninominales* deputies and left 111 seats to be distributed between the rest of the parties. In this occasion the PMT was summed to the opposition parties, and so there were already 9 parties in the political fight.

Despite the almost absolute control of the PRI in the legislative posts, Woldenberg says that "the congress —and more specifically the House of Representatives— was the first state institution, federal in nature, to assimilate the impact of the political plurality. It turned into a space of debate and recreation of the diversity and into a scenario of experimentation and innovation through the democracy changing process. The Congress history illustrates in a unbeatable way the different stages of the democratic transition …After the 1979 elections, the representation in the House of Representatives passed from four to seven parties, and the majority of the PRI went down to 74%, percentage that remained stable during the 1982 elections (74.8% of the deputies) and also in 1985 (73%). This means that, even when the PRI maintained its hegemony, during three legislatures an environment of coexistence in the House of Representatives was being created that, gradually, contributed to not demonize the oppositions and to install the idea of political diversity as something natural in the Mexican scenery". (Woldenberg, 2006: 26)

With that scenario the juncture of the 1982 presidential elections took place, which constitutes the third transcendental event in the Mexican transition progress to democracy. According to some modifications to the electoral laws, the political parties were able to build coalitions to present just one candidate. Carlos Salinas de Gortari had been postulated by the PRI; Manuel Clouthier was PAN's candidate, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who had been originally postulated by the PARM, started to extend his political support through the National Democratic Front (*Frente Nacional Democrático)*, making it possible for many left and center-left parties to converge in his postulation. In that occasion the electoral system "fell down" because, in the night of July 6th, having been inaugurated a gradual public count of the votes, the public version was suspended where Engineer Cárdenas appeared leading the general ballot. In the next day, the official result: Salinas had won the presidency with 51% of the votes, Cárdenas got the second place with the 31% and Clouthier got the third place with the 17%. The accusations of electoral fraud for the results' manipulation made by the government were never denied for the electoral packages were never opened: ordered by the House of Representatives, still under PRI's control, and with Salinas as president, those packages were burned. "In 1998 the panism (*panismo*) and the neopanism —with Manuel J. Clouthier at the lead—, in one side, and the National Democratic Front (Frente Democrático Nacional), under Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo's leadership, in the other, surprised and maybe defeated the PRI, but a blatant and brutal fraud gave the victory, once again, to the PRI's candidate, Carlos Salinas". (Meyer, 2005: 70)

Officially the PRI imposed itself, but not in an overwhelming way: "as a result of that controversial ballot, the PRI obtained just the 52% of the seats in the House of Representatives and for the very first time 4 legislators that had not been postulated by the ruling party but by the National Democratic Front, which had Cárdenas as candidate for the presidency, arrived to the Senate. That suppose that, for the first time, the PRI required some kind of agreement with other political forces if it wanted to modify the constitutional text" (Woldenberg, 2006: 27). The government's party, summing the relative majority and the proportional representation deputies, obtained 270 seats; the parties that were part of the FDN got a total of 129 seats divided, overall, between the PPS, the PARM, the PFCRN, and the PMS. Meanwhile, the PAN, which was the third force in the presidential candidacy, continued as the second in the House of Representatives with 101 seats.

The 1991 and 1994 elections represented, for the PRI, an electoral recovery after the significant 1988 descend. PRI's number of deputies was raised to 320 in 1991 and in 1994 it got 300; its control over the legislative organ was still total. The PAN had 89 deputies in 1991 and 119 in 1994. By his side, the Engineer Cárdenas could not maintain united the FDN's forces and founded the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD: *Partido de la Revolución Democrática)*, which obtained 41 deputies in 1991 and 71 in 1994. The other parties (PPS, PARM, PFCRN) obtained in total 50 positions in 1991, whereas in 1994 they lost their register for they did not achieved the minimum percentage of votes demanded by the law and so they did not appear in the Congress' representation; in 1994, only the new Labor Party (PT: *Partido del Trabajo)* was integrated in the legislative apparatus with 10 deputies in order to work with (or against) the PRI, PAN and PRD.

The fourth important moment in this political transition is located in the 1997 elections, when for the first time, the PRI lost, in a federal level, the absolute majority of the House of Representatives, while in the D.F. the PRD's candidate for the Federal District, Engineer Cárdenas, obtained an overwhelming victory. The PRI gained in total 239 deputies, which, over the total 500, was not enough to impose its proposals among the deputies; from this point they would have to negotiate with the other political forces to be able to get the agreements. The PAN obtained 122 while the PRD got 125. More than a two party system, in Mexico a three party model was starting to be drawn, in which, that year, also obtained a minority representation both the PT with 6 deputies and the PVEM with 8.

What was significant in the Federal District's case was not just the 1997 PRD's victory but its overwhelming triumph that was recognized the same night of the 6th of July by the President of the Republic, Ernesto Zedillo. In the morning of the 7th July, the IFE, with the 80% of the polling booths computed, offered these results: 47,7% of the votes for the PRD; 25% for the PRI, and 16% for the PAN. In a far but significant fourth place was the PVEM with 6.9% of the ballot.

On the other side, a change in the correlation of forces also started to be felt in the Republic's Senate within the total group of the 124: in 1997, the PRI continued to have the absolute majority with 76 senators, but the presence of other parties started to increase in a significant way: the PAN obtained 32, the PRD 14, and both the PT and the PVEM 1 each.

In the country's political life the negotiation and the compromise had been installed as the obligatory way to achieve agreements. "The President's

party did not achieve the absolute majority in the House of Representatives. The PRI had to be pleased with 47.8% of the representatives, this number was inferior to the PAN's (24.2%) and PRD's (25%) sum. In that same year, in the Senate the political forces were equilibrated as never before: the PRI obtained 60.2%, the PAN 25.8%, the PRD 12,5% and the PT and the PVEM 0.8% each. Since that moment, not only to modify the Constitution but to make any law project advance, the agreement of two or more political forces was needed; not a single party can make its will and approchement, negotiations and pacts are needed more than ever" (Woldenberg, 2006: 27). A stage of a more real parliamentary atmosphere took place in which the legislative power as an Executive's appendage started to be part of the past. The existence of three big political forces offered the historical opportunity of the negotiation, of the agreement, of the search for consensus. The vigilance over the governmental workers acting started to be part of the day life through better transparency and control laws.

On the other hand, in the States of the Republic, even though in 1997 the PRI still had an absolute majority of the governors, the process also started its diversification because the PAN governed Baja California Norte, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Nuevo León and Jalisco, and the PRD had the Federal District.

As a result of this fourth event of the 1997 elections we have to point out the birth of the Electoral Federal Institute that no longer depended of the government but instead had a clear autonomy to organize ballots and the vote counting. In the institutionalization of the democratic process, certainly the role of the autonomous electoral advisers was a key step to give more credibility to the electoral results. Since its creation as the PNR in 1929 until its end as the ruling party in 2000, PRI's history was, permanently, a constant generator of doubts over the way the votes were counted; Mexico's political history with numerous analysts and historians had given enough count of how this party kept itself in power with extreme methods such as the stealing of ballot boxes, overall, through the falsification of the results or the inflation of votes with countless *clientelism* methods. Mexico needed an instrument that could guarantee a bigger credibility in the results. This was possible, in part, thanks to the IFE and its first generation of advisers, whose proof of fire was the presidential elections of 2000.

In Mexico's history, the presidential election of 2000 was some type of "before and after" event: 71 years of uninterrupted government of the PRI in the presidency of the Republic and a new period of alternation with a

different party at the head of the government had taken place. For that, this event turns into the fifth significant event of the Mexican transition process.

The 5th of July of 2000, the IFE officially informed that, having counted the 100% of the polling booths (113.406), 37 million 603.855 votes had been emitted for the candidates to president of the Republic, of which the 43,43% (15 millions 988.725) were for the Alliance for the Change *(Alianza por el Cambio)* candidate, Vicente Fox. In this way, the PRI and its candidate Francisco Labastida lost the presidency and opened the path for alternation.

**Electoral results for President 2000**

| | |
|---|---|
| PAN Vicente Fox | 43,43% 15.988.725 votes |
| PRI Francisco Labastida | 36,88% 13.576.386 votes |
| PRD Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas | 17% 6.259.012 votes |
| PDS | 1,67% 592.072 votes |
| PCD | 0,57% 208.258 votes |
| PARM | 0,43% 157.119 votes |

*Source: IFE 2000*

This alternation result was the most significant for the country's political life, but the *gobernability issue* was still in the discussion: "The president's party just not does not have the absolute majority in the Congress, but also is the second political force in both cameras (the PAN had 40% of the deputies and the PRI, 42%; in the Senate, the PAN counted with 35.9% and the PRI, with 46.9%)" (Woldenberg, 2006: 28). In the other way, the tendency to a three party system started to disappear because the PRD only obtained 52 deputies of the 500; it was the third force but with an important distance with the two parties that were in the firsts places. Finally, diverse parties were present in the Congress but with a minority influence that would only be important in case of voting tide between the principal forces: the PVEM obtained 14 deputies, the PT 8, while the Party of the Nationalist Society (PSN) obtained 3, the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD: *Partido Convergencia Democrática)* 3 and the Social Alliance Party (PAS: *Partido Alianza Social)*

2. The obvious result was the lack of national agreements to important reforms that the country needed. Woldenberg's vision, despite everything, was too optimistic: "if we wished democracy and a multi party system, we already have them" (Woldenberg, 2006: 30); he only wanted that what was achieved did not erode and that it started to show results.

For the 2003 federal elections there were no substantial changes, although the PAN lost positions in comparison with the PRI. This last one obtained 34,4% of the ballot while the PAN descended to 30,5%; the PRD got frustrated by having not achieved the 20% expected for it only achieved 17,1%.

**2003 General voting**

| PAN | PRI | PRD | PVEM | PT | CONV | PSN | PAS | MEXP | PFC | PLM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30,5% | 34,4% | 17,1% | 6,2% | 2,4% | 2,3% | 0,3% | 0,7% | 1% | 0,5% | 0,4% |

*Source: IFE 2003*

Abstention seemed to be the winner because it reached and approximate 59%. However, according to the results, the PAN, despite boasts about having been the alternation party, its first years left a poor image in the population and because of that it was exceeded by the PRI. If presidential elections would have taken place in 2003, the old hegemonic party of the twentieth century would have returned to the presidency. The rest of the parties, without counting the big three, still remained with little importance: only the PT and Convergencia survived because the other organizations lost or did not achieved sufficient votes for the legal register.

## Conflictive elections in 2006

The alternation with Vicente Fox in the presidency of the PAN was not able to consolidate a more credible election system for the citizens. The principal error was in the new conformation of the IFE with different electoral advisors that, aside that the PRD was not represented in the Council, were not at the level that the country demanded with a clear autonomy from the government itself.

PRD's mistakes and the high level negotiations between the principal parties led to the conformation of a handicap IFE. The PRD was pulled out of the game and the advisors were selected only by the PRI and the PAN.

Mexico's economical context, according to data from the World Bank, was rather difficult. The terrible 1994-95 crisis had been overcome but with a slow and non-stable growing.

**México**: **general information 2005**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population: | 102.29 million |
| Income per capita: | 5.070 dollars per year |
| Life expectancy: | 72 years |
| HDI Rank: | 51 |
| Adult literacy | 91% |
| Infant mortality | 29/1000 |
| Maternal mortality | 55/100K |
| Women labor force | 33% |
| Freedom of press | 54/100 |
| Governance percentile | 54 |
| Confidence range | 49-62 |

*Source: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2005/worldmap.asp#map*

President Fox could presume that México was among the first 12 world economies because of the magnitude of its gross domestic product; however, the poverty levels, according to numbers from the *Comité Técnico de Medición de la Pobreza* (an institution created by the government, entrepreneurs and intellectuals), had reached half of the population.

The 2006 electoral scenario was prepared in practice since four years before but the parties' internal disputes had to be solved first. In the PRD, the struggle was clear between the two principal leaders that were after the nomination: Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). In the PAN, the fight was between Santiago Creel, initially supported by the President Vicente Fox, and Felipe Calderón, uncovered by Jalisco's governor. In the PRI, the struggle between the candidates Roberto Madrazo, Montiel and Jackson was decided in favor of the first but the party arrived to the elections completely divided by the civil war between Madrazo

himself as president of the party and Elba Esther Gordillo, general secretary of the same party.

AMLO's triumph in the PRD and Madrazo's in the PRI was achieved with serious damage of civil war scars: Cárdenas never openly supported AMLO during the campaign, while Gordillo and her big influence in the teacher's union openly tried to rest votes to Madrazo. The PAN also arrived injured to the final struggle with Calderón as candidate, but Vicente Fox accepted Creel's lost and understood that the historical balance of his government depended on PAN's victory in 2006 and for that he dedicated himself, legal and illegally —as it was openly reproached by the Electoral Tribunal by pointing out the irregularities of the process—, to support Calderón with governmental resources.

In the beginning of 2006 and after the whole drama of the intent to take away his political privileges —that intended to prevent that AMLO could legally participate as candidate— the so called " El Peje"[34] widely led the polls. In fact, he turned into the PAN's and PRI'S principal enemy to defeat. Being this last one in the third place of the electoral preferences, the Mexican electoral battle was clearly drew between two different projects: one and the other represented the left and right ideologies in its fundamental postulates: the PRD looking for a change in favor of the poor, fight against the neoliberal model, against the state corruption, the concentration of the wealth, in favor of the state's intervention in the economy, in favor of the autonomy of the Mexican state in front of the United States and not a submission; the PAN was trying to be presented as an ally of the church and of the big business men, which give employment and create the fundamental wealth for everyone, against subsidies, in favor of the free market, presenting a model of growing that sooner or later would have to benefit everyone.

It was about a fundamental ideological contradiction but not always clear in the facts. AMLO was accused by different sectors of the left of believing himself a messianic protagonist or simply for representing a modified PRD because of his political background. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, for example, rested votes to the PRD simply because he was not the candidate; it had been a battle of leaderships, but Cárdenas, with his defeat in the PRD, never wanted to adopt an institutional position and took distance from AMLO during the whole campaign; on the other hand, despite the little significance of Marcos' "other campaign" and the Zapata's Army of National Libera-

[34] Andrés Manuel López Obrador has two nicknames: AMLO and El Peje.

tion (EZLN: *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional*), they were able to rest votes to "El Peje" because the Zapatistas reminded how the PRD legislators voted against its indigene law in 2002. In the case of the PAN a lot of business men and bankers certainly took an open position in favor of Calderón, although there were also significant economic figures, as Carlos Slim, that had openly collaborated with AMLO when he was governor of the Federal District —overall in the project of the downtown's redesign— and that maintained a neutral position during the campaign.

Madrazo, in a particular moment, wanted to present himself as a reasonable center-left position, differentiating himself from the ideological extremes, but his political destiny was sealed because, despite of his father's progressive image during the 60's, he was surrounded in his career as governor of Tabasco and as PRI's president by a continuous authoritarian and corruption aura, as by the effective national campaign of Elba Esther Gordillo against him.

The electoral preferences of June 2006 certainly show a clear decrease of AMLO's image and an elevation of the PAN's option with Calderón. This was in part caused, as many analysts had pointed, by some actions of "El Peje" himself and PRD's, but also by the President's Fox open campaign in the media to take credit away from him. This is something that is very clear in the *Tribunal Federal Electoral* report.[35] And not only did the president of the Republic open campaign against the "Peje" but many and powerful business organizations through the Coordinating Busenessmen Comittee (*Consejo Coordinaror Empresarial*: CEE), as it says in the Tribunal's report.

At the end of the electoral day, the IFE stated a technical tie and finally gave the victory to Felipe Calderón. The PAN officially obtained 14 million 916.927 votes (35,71%) while AMLO got 14 million 683.096 (35,15%). The difference, for the magnitude of the voters, was minimum: only 233.831 votes, which represented 0.56%. Finally in September, the Electoral Tribunal considered that the irregularities committed were not enough to cancel the ballot and so PAN's victory was ratified.

[35] It is expressed like this in the report that appeared on September 6, 2006: "This superior hall does not deny that the analyzed declarations of the President of the Republic, Vicente Fox, constituted a risk for the election's validation that, of having not been debilitated its possible influence with the diverse acts and concurrent circumstances, could have represented a bigger element to considerate them as determinants for the final result, of having occurred other irregularities of importance that will remain accredited".

**Results of the Mexican presidential election:**
**2nd July 2006**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | RESULT | VOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acción Nacional | Felipe Calderón Hinojosa | 35,71% | 14.916.927 |
| Coalición por el Bien de Todos (Prd, Pt, Convergencia) | Andrés Manuel López Obrador | 35,15% | 14.683.096 |
| Alianza por México (Pri, Pvem) | Roberto Madrazo Pintado | 22,26% | 9.237.000 |
| Alternativa Social Demócrata y Campesina | Patricia Mercado Castro | | 1.124.280 |
| Nueva Alianza | Roberto Campa Cifrán | | 397.550 |
| Not Registered | | | 298.204 |
| Not Valid | | | 900.873 |
| **Total Voting** | | | **41.557.430** |

*Source: IFE, 2006*

After what happened in the 1988 elections, the accusation and the well founded suspicious always remained over the possible manipulation by the government over the electoral results. In that time, the government itself organized the ballot and, for it, the suspicious is the more valid. But in 2006, the existence of the IFE offered a greater guaranty of government unbias; however, the second generation of IFE advisors, by having excluded the PRD's important representation, and by the weakness they showed —principally the president advisor Carlos Ugalde— in the vigilance of the entire process, all this also contributed to make more profound the doubt. For example, Alberto Aziz, pointed out that the President of the Republic and the businessmen as some of the responsible of having blocked the democratic transition: "The arbitrator, the IFE, by his lack of forcefulness, its strategic mistakes, the lack of pulchritude and the evasion in front of the powerful interests. Vicente Fox, for an obsessive intervention against AMLO. The business groups, for forcing the electoral order and setting a campaign in favor of one party". (Aziz, A. *El Universal*, 8-VIII-2006)

Ignacio Ramonet, from Le Monde Diplomatique, does not doubt in his words over the 2006 Mexican electoral process, with the source of numerous international observers: "A massive fraud. And indisputable. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Comission, accepted it. The twenty five European ministers of foreign affairs manifested their *serious preoccupation*. *It is important that we transmit in the most clear possible way the worry of the European Union and of all the member States about the election's result,* declared the Dutch minister of foreign affairs… The National Democratic Institue (NDI) presided by Madeleine Albright, former State secretary; the Freedom House, directed by James Woosley, former director of the CIA; the American Enterprise Institute impulsed by the former president Gerald Ford; even the Open Society Institute, directed by George Soros, denounced *massive manipulations* and demand *economical sanctions*. Senator Richard Lugar, president of the senate's foreign affairs commission and president's George W. Bush envoy, did not doubt in speaking openly about frauds: "*It is evident that a wide and concentrated program of frauds existed during the elections day, whether under the direction of the authorities or with its complicity"*. (Ramonet, Rebelión, 08-09-2006)

In the 2006, in a special way, it was recognized a minimum official difference of percentage in the final voting between the first and the second place and, because Fox's government itself made a media campaign —with an important business sector— in favor of Calderón, what we have then is a backward movement in the consolidation of the electoral institutions, that could not guaranty its credibility. When a year later, in 2007, the political parties started a new electoral reform, they made the IFE's president advisor fall with two other advisors, leaving two more waiting to be removed in 2008. With the new reform, also, it was decreed that the money for the paties' campaigns through the media will be, in the future, directly managed by the IFE. With that, the third generation of electoral advisors had their proof of fire in the 2009 federal elections and, again, in the 2012 with another presidential election in which the defeated AMLO fought again.

The final result for México, anyway, despite the existence of the alternative of a "legitimate president" after the 2006 elections, is a government with a right ideology that, with Alvaro Uribe in Colombia are the two presidents that do not shy away from this political category. Uribe himself has been accused and proved in 2008 of having used legal mediums to modify the constitution and make possible his reelection as president, like it did actually happen. With this, with the president's Fox illegalities to favor the victory of his candidate Calderón, is clearly shown how far political groups can go to

continue in power. Democracy, therefore, is not played only on the election day but in numerous and diverse instances of social participation.

In the Mexican case, the 2006 elections are already part of the history but the experience will remain present in every ballot. The ideological polarization will remain for they were 15 million votes for the right and almost 15 million for the left. It stayed clear that with alternation, being the result of a positive process to political plurality, there's not necessarily an economical turn over or in the way that politics are made; from PRI to PAN existed an alternation but the economical model continued to be the same as the same old Mexican political ways; the PRD certainly in its proposals promised deeper changes in the different social and government levels, overall in the classic positions of neo liberalism. AMLO said during the August 7th 2006 manifestation in front of the Electoral Tribunal in Mexico City: "We are going to start the movement to transform the institutions of our country… We are going to change this reality of injustice and oppression that have damaged so much our country; we are going to, even if they do not like it, purify the public life" (AMLO, *El Universal*, 8-VIII-2006). The PAN in reality was "more of the same" with the 2000 alternation, and will have to be in the future another option to see if the country can go with its economical potential to a real development with a bigger distribution of the social wealth.

## Final considerations

The transition to a democratic process in México is clear but has certain worrying particularities. In the first place, it has been too slow if we count the five great historical moments that have been told previously: the 1968 student's movement, the 1977 political reform, the controversial 1988 presidential elections, the 1997 moment when the PRI lost the absolute majority in the House of Representatives, and the 2000 alternation. But also, in the second place, it has not ended with alternation for the democratic institutions had not been consolidated to offer a solid certainty over the voting results themselves. As Lorenzo Meyer says, "it is undeniable that the Mexican political system has suffered a substantial transformation through the last fifteen years, but also is undeniable that the change has been inferior to that the modernization, the history, and above everything, the justice and some decency require and demand. The quality of the current Mexican political life and the one that is made out for the future leave much to desire, and

perhaps it is not completely alien to it the fact that Mexican transition has been so long, full of incertainities, unresolved issues and actors that had not always been at the level of the circumstances; in few words, a thorny history written with the twists of a bad pulse". (Meyer, 2005: 71)

At the ballot level, the left was clearly present in Mexico even though many radical analysts do not want to recognize it to the followers of López Obrador because numerous sectors of his party were part of the PRI in past years; others accept he is from left but with the adjective of "reformist/systematic", wanting to distinguish it from other left "revolutionary/anti systemic" (Cfr. Hernández, en Picardo O., 1999); however, clearly opposing to PAN's right, this tendency was close to win the presidency, despite the difficulties and intern conflicts in the PRD, the party that postulated AMLO; his own ideological postulates are placed it the left line. For that, although they did not win, the increase is unquestionable. "The disputed elections in passed July in Mexico seem to attack the regional tendency by placing in power, again, a government from the right. However, the course of the following events make very difficult to affirm that the Mexican society accepts this situation. The electoral fraud accusations persist, half of the population that voted against the right is still moving and unsatisfied" (Carlsen, L., 2006). It can not be denied the existence of the barely 15 million votes that favored this option. In this way, this political alternative as an heterogeneous left will continue to be present in the next electoral process, as it happened again in the 2012 presidential elections.

# Chapter V

# Ideological Center Positions

In this chapter we have located three countries from a relative vision of the organizations that gained the presidency: Honduras, Costa Rica and Peru. The fundamental reason is located in their postures in relation to the other contender parties: the Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH: Partido Liberal de Honduras), although, for many decades, within of a traditional bipartisan system structure with the National Party of Honduras (PNH: Partido Nacional de Honduras), with a clear right orientation, they represent a more liberal option and it is because of this that we located it at the beginning in a tendency towards the center; the National Liberation Party (PLN: Partido de Liberación Nacional) from Costa Rica is differentiated both from its traditional right rival, the Party of the Christian Social Unity (PUSC: Partido de la Unidad Social Cristiana) and from the new left force that almost obtained the presidency over Oscar Arias, the organization Civic Action (PAC: Partido Acción Ciudadana) with its candidate Otton Solis. In other side, the American Revolutionary Popular Alliance (APRA: Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) from Peru is distinguished as much from the right candidate Lourdes Flores (supported by Alejandro Toledo's government) as from the candidate's Ollanta Umala new left organization. When we speak of an ideological center, perhaps we could even try more differentiations by distinguishing a left-center or a right-center, but that would lead to many shades to limit a number of almost invisible boundaries. Each case explanaiton will help us make this affirmation stronger.

In the case of Honduras,[36] as we have mentioned, Zelaya's party had a more liberal ideology than the Honduran National Party, although, inside

[36] The center category over the Honduras' government (Manuel Zelaya) is valid when it is compared with its counterpart of the National Party, even though both organizations have

the traditional bipartisan sketch, it is linked to the country's economical elite, that has not permitted fundamental changes in the economical and political national structure; both parties were also aligned with the United States during the whole military conflict in Nicaragua and El Salvador back in the 80's. However, we should have to consider the new president's approach with the block of the ALBA to show certain distance of the right postures.

In Costa Rica, in a similar way to Honduras, a traditional two-party system between liberals and conservatives also existed: the Party of the Christian Social Unity (PUSC) and the National Liberation Party (PLN). In relative terms, the PUSC represented the right and the PLN the left, but both of them alternated themselves in the presidency without changing the general structure of the country. However, what was new in the 2006 elections was the rupture of the bipartisan system when the PUSC felt to the forth place with a poor 3,55% of the ballot and when a new option, Civic Action, with its candidate Ottón Solís was near to achieve the presidency, as they ended just a few percentage points bellow the winner PLN with Oscar Arias. Civic Action is recognized as a left-center ideology overall by maintaining a rough critic against the CAFTA (the trade agreement between Central America and the United States). In this way, unlike Honduras, Costa Rica's presidential electoral process did offer a great innovation in the forces correlation, breaking the bipartisan system and locating the winner Oscar Arias with a clear difference both from the traditional right and from the apparition of a surprising progressive trend, even though it came from the rupture of a traditional party.

In Perú we also find a novelty in the 2006 electoral process for the current president, the indigenous Alejandro Toledo, openly supported the right candidate, Lourdes Flores, differentiating himself both from Alan García, candidate of the American Revolutionary Popular Alliance (APRA), and from Ollanta Umala, postulated by his left movement United for Peru (Unidos por Perú). In this triangle of the three principal contending forces during the first electoral round, it seems clear to locate Alan Garcia as a center option, which is the one that permits us locate him in this chapter; even in this same context, Garcia appears ideologically with a left trend. However, the APRA was able to obtain the second place in the first electoral round and for that he arrived to the second ballot to confront Ollanta Umala, in an

formed a bipartisan system of the national oligarchy in the last decades. We can bring to this point George Couffignal's opinion (2007: 10) who locates, for example, Zelaya's government in Honduras as a center tendency.

ideological scenario where all the right supported García to be able to defeat Umala's organization.

In this way, the three winner presidents in 2006, Zelaya in Honduras, Arias in Costa Rica and García in Peru were differentiated as much from the clear right positions as from the new left alternatives, and for that we locate them in this center category.

## 5.1. HONDURAS: continuation of the Bipartisan System

We have talked about Honduras' case and its 2005 presidential elections and the coming to power of the new President Manuel Zelaya in January 2006 in a previous book (Delgado, Medina y Gómez, 2007[37]) to put in evidence the continuation of the bipartisan system in the Central American nation, where the National and Liberal parties have alternated the power between them in the last decades.

Honduras was a country of 6,97 million people with an average of income per capita of 860 USD per year, which located it as one of the poorest countries of the continent. In fact, applying the criteria of the UN's Human Development Index —which considers the level of income and the average status of health and education—, we find that it is located in the number 107 of all the countries in the world (World Bank, 2005).

The political power of this Central American country, in general, always has been controlled by the military and determined groups of the business elite which have expressed themselves in a continuous presidential shift, almost every time, between the two political forces: the Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH) and the National Party of Honduras (Cfr. Medina 1998: 51). Even though the first party defines itself as liberal and the second as conservative and they actually have contradictions in their positions in some matters, they have always been shown linked to the economic oligarchies and always with an explicit alignment to the United States governments; during the times of the military conflict in El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 80's, the different governments allowed the United States to settle numerous military bases in Honduran territory to confront overall the supposed menace of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. Both parties, in other way, supported the proposal of the

[37] In this book published by the University of Guadalajara (Delgado, Medina y Gómez, 2007), one of the chapters focuses in another version, an analysis of the presidential elections in Honduras (2005), Bolivia (2005), Chile (2005-2006), Costa Rica (2006) and Colombia (2006).

free trade agreement with the United States (CAFTA: Central America Free Trade Agreement), a proposal that confronted the opposition of big sectors of the population. (Cfr. LABD, 2006)

In this whole context, the November 27 of 2005 elections and Zelaya won and sworn in as president but at the begining he did not offer new alternatives to modify the country's course; certainly there was a change of political party in the government, there was alternation, but it was the traditional alternation of the bipartisan system that has ruled over decades. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales won with the 49,9% of the ballot and he was sworn in the Friday 27 of January 2006. His electoral opponent was Porfirio Lobo, of the PNH, who got 46,2% of the votes.

Even though the liberal party has been opposition in front of the ruling national party, the new presidency of Zelaya does not mean any structural change for the country. Certainly the struggle of the national and liberal parties elites over the government control unleashed passions and aggressive attacks among their candidates. The country was even near to certain political crisis because of the closed of the election, because the Supreme Electoral Tribunal took a long time without officially declaring a winner, and because the president in charge, Ricardo Maduro, from the National Party, had openly supported Porfirio Lobo and he refused to recognize the results that showed Zelaya as the winner.

The two main candidates did not have big differences in relation with the essential proposals over the country's model, but the traditional rivalry between those two groups and the extreme wish to be in the government led them to passionate clashes, to the point that many journalists said that the November 2005 electoral campaign was the most dirty in all the Honduran history. One of the most argued points was, for example, the death penalty proposal (Lobo was in favor, Zelaya against), in a context where the delinquency and the habitant's insecurity had been increasing, having, overall, the scenario of the violence caused by the youth gangs. The struggles between both parties, despite their subjection to the country's business elites, were expressed in numerous violent verbal attacks; the struggle to kept the important political posts in government will always cause clashes even between best friends: in the Honduran case, what was at risk was not only the country's presidency but also 128 seats in the Congress and 298 municipal presidencies. Until December the 5th 2005, Lobo and his conservative party started to accept the liberal triumph, though the final and definitive results did not appear to the public light until December 23rd, almost a month after the election day.

**Presidential election in Honduras**:
**November 2005**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | % OF VOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH) | José Manuel Zelaya Rosales | 49,9% |
| National Party of Honduras (PNH) | Porfirio Lobo | 46,2% |

*Source: Tribunal Supremo Electoral de Honduras (www.tse.hn)*

The difference between both parties was of a little more than three point percentage points. The Liberal and the National have been the principal and almost the only electoral opponents. In this occasion, for example, three more presidential candidates also participated but that only achieved a small percentage of the ballot: Juan Ángel Almendarez Bonilla, of the Democratic Unification (Unificación Democrática) organization, with 1,5% of the votes; Juan Ramón Martínez, postulated by the Christian Democrat Party of Honduras (PDCH: Partido Demócrata Cristiano de Honduras), with 1,4% of the ballot; Carlos Alejandro Soza Coello, of the Social Democrat Innovation and Unity (Innovación y Unidad Social Demócrata) organization, with 1% of the ballot. And it is also necessary to include the important information about the low participation level of the citizens in the electoral process. "In Honduras, in the November 27, 2005 elections, the majority of the votes were distributed between the Liberal Party and the now opponent National Party, but with the backdrop of an abstentionism that practically reached the 50%. Manuel Zelaya, the new president qualified by some as a right populist, was not able to obtain the majority in the Congress, which supposes a panorama of negotiation with the National Party or with the representatives of other small groups". (Rojas M., 2006)

In this way, one can conclude that in Honduras, the electoral process had been stolen by the country's business and political elites, who live in a traditional bipartisan system that has not given a space to new political options. However, each party has its own way to govern that has to be adapted to the particular political circumstances. In this case, 53 years old, Manuel Zelaya, although he did not achieve a legislative majority (only 62 deputies and 52 of the National Party, of a total of 128), he could avoid certain political crisis because he achieved an alliance with two small parties: the Social Democrat

Innovation and Unity, and the Democratic Unification, for some observers this action gave to the PLH government a left-center touch. The president manifested that his government priorities would be "honesty and transparency" for these are the things that, according to his vision, the country needs the most; in consequence with it, he signed a Citizens Participation Law (Ley de Participacion Ciudadana), which would "give the people the participation to watch the government and put an end to the corruption in Honduras" (LABD, *NotiCen*, Feb 2, 2006). In the same way, he emphasized that one of his biggest commitments was public education. Among other promises, during his investiture, he expressed his desire to protect the natural resources, especially water, to offer citizens more security by increasing the number of police officers, offer housing programs for the poor… During his government, Zelaya (2006-2009) made a slide movement to the left making alliances with Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua,… in the international relations while within the country he emphasized the public policy for the people. For this movement to the left, he suffered a rejection from the economic elite and many congressmen, who prepared the coup on June 28, 2009.

## 5.2. COSTA RICA: surmounting the Bipartisan System

The country had a population of 4 million people; it stands out in the Central American context because of its relative democratic stability and for an economic level that is superior to the rest of its neighbors (an average income of 3.810 USD per year, according to the World Bank). This situation of political stability, a better economic situation that comes with more effective programs to redistribute the wealth (the literacy, for example, goes up to the 96% of the population) contrast with the rest of the Central American countries and has caused a constant migration of the Nicaraguans who, in a legal or illegal way, had settled in Costa Rican land. If we look through the UN's Human Development Index we find Costa Rica in the 41st place, it is higher than Mexico and Brazil. This index considers as much the income as the levels of education and health, and for it represents a better quality of life if we compare it to its neighbors; the Nicaraguan migration can be explained overall because of economic reasons for, according to the World Bank, the average income in Nicaragua was 400 USD and the country was in the 106 place of the same index.

The new president Oscar Arias Sánchez, who had been postulated by the National Liberation Party (PLN) had already been president in the country (1986-1990) and obtained the Nobel Peace Prize, because of his labor in favor of the pacification of Central America in 1987, for his peace proposal in the —Esquipulas Agreements—, also known as Plan Arias. However, despite his background, in the elections of February the 5th 2006 he did not obtain a broad victory, although he was declared elected president and was sworn in on January 8th 2006. After a polemic counting, the final result favored him with 40,02% of the votes, while his left opponent, Ottón Solis Fallas, almost reaches him with the 39,80% of the ballot. With the surprising rise of Civic Action (Acción Ciudadana), the traditional bipartisan system between the PLN and the PUSC was left behind, because this last one with its candidate Ricardo Jaime Toledo Carranza descended to the fourth place with a meaningless 3,55%; the third place was occupied by Otto Guevara Ruth from the Libertarian Movement (Movimiento Libertario) with the 8,48%. Antonio Alvares of the Union for the Change (Unión para el Cambio) followed with a poor result (2,44%), National Unity's (Unidad Nacional) Jose Manuel Echandi was the next (1,64%) and Juan José Vargas from Country First (Patria Primero) only obtained 1,08% of the votes. There were seven more presidential candidates[38] but they did not even reach 1% of the general voting.

Even though Costa Rica's reputation remains as one of the most democratic of the continent, this election was complicated and lasted several weeks to call a winner. The poll houses were wrong in their appreciations (they predicted that Arias would clearly win, at least by a ten point percentage) and, as well, the size of the scandals amongst the political parties distanced the people in the election day to cause an 35% abstentionism. PLN's principal opponent, Ottón Solís from the Civic Union Party (PAC: Partido Acción Ciudadana), with a left-center ideology, was close to tie the election. As an example of the possible tie, two days after the voting and with the 88.44% of the national votes electronically counted, Arias had 591.769 votes (40,51%) while Solis reached the 588.519 votes (40,28%), which gave only a difference of 3.250 votes, with a remaining 17% to be counted (Cfr.

[38] These seven candidates were: Jose Miguel Villalobos, from the Nationalist Democratic Alliance (Alianza Democratica Nacionalista) (0.23%); Manuel V. de la Cruz, from Democratic Force (Fuerza Democrática) (0,19%); Álvaro E. Montero, from National Rescue (Rescate Nacional) (0,15%); Humberto E. Vargas, from United Left Coalition (Coalicion Izquierda Unida) (0,14%), and José H. Arce, from Patriotic Union (Unión Patriotica) (0,11%) (Data from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, from Costa Rica).

LABD, *NotiCen* Feb 9, 2006). With that, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal decided to go to the slow count vote by vote in the whole 6,163 polling booths across the country —which would take several weeks—, and so guarantee total transparency in the elections. International Transparency, political parties' representatives and numerous civic organizations gathered around the counting centers. In this issue, the Costa Rican electoral institutions gave another example for the democratic stability, for its attempt to give the whole world clarity over the exact result of the ballot. At the end, Arias was recognized as the winner over Solís with 18.167 more votes, in a close electoral fight that did not take place in the country since 1966 when José Joaquín Trejos defeated Daniel Oduber with a difference of only 4.220 votes.

This Costa Rica's exemplary attitude would not be taken in count in the Mexican post-electoral situation, in middle 2006, and for that in this country was caused the uncertainty over who really won, despite the formal declaration of the victory in favor of Felipe Calderón.

In Costa Rica, numerous predictions in favor of Arias' victory were manifested before the electoral date; it was thought that his previous fame as a Nobel Prize winner next to the PUSC's crisis, who with the PLN were just the two traditional political parties that have always disputed the presidency, would give him a broad victory. And in fact, as it was foreseen, Ricardo Jaime Toledo, the PUSC's candidate, only obtained 3,55% of the votes, but only a few expected the PAC's surprise with Ottón Solís. Arias himself confessed to the journalists: "This result is unexpected; Ottón gained more than anyone would have projected" (LABD. *NotiCen*, Feb. 9, 2006).

What influenced the electorate to put under question the almost sure Arias' election? We have to count, in one hand, that the leader's international fame does not necessary leads to a generalized acceptance in the national atmosphere; in Guatemala, the also Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchú, would also be presidential candidate a year later and would categorically fail. In fact, inside Costa Rica, even before the electoral date, a sector of the population had considered as unconstitutional Arias' postulation for a second term. Arias' candidacy was not for a consecutive term, as his first administration was from 1986 to 1990, but the approval for him to be able to contend again as candidate was not given by legislative power but it was decided in a Court's Constitutional Hall (Sala Constitucional de la Corte). On the other hand, the PLN arrived to the 2006 electoral process after having lost the presidency in two consecutive times and in the middle of internal divisions. However, the most important point of the electoral controversy was around the approval or

rejection of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) with the United States, because of the immediate consequences that could be foreseen over the national lifestyle, especially in the agrarian sector.

Ottón Solís' position and his party's was not a frontal opposition to the CAFTA: they explained that they would only support it if it was renegotiated. Arias, unlikely, openly manifested his support to the treaty. Costa Rica was turned into the only Central American country without having ratified the CAFTA and this occurred within the public discussion, with great fears over the agrarian production and the national industry by entering in direct competition with the North American production. It can be seen that the elections were transformed barely in a referendum on the free trade with the United States issue; a big part of the population manifested against the neoliberal model and took advantage of Solis' candidacy to make front to Arias' free trade ideology. In fact, Arias got to obtain the victory with a minimum difference of votes, but the ratification of the treaty was not assured as he did not have a majority in the congress; with that, the CAFTA could not start operating in January 2007 but it had to be decided in a national referendum, in which finally won the Yes with a small difference, showing how the population was always divided in this matter.

Alberto Canas, one of the PLN's founders that had abandoned the party to go with Solís to the PAC manifested this core preoccupation: "This is a country of small owners, small farmers and small businessmen. The fact that the government abandoned the small businessmen and chosed the big industries and the big banks made a lot of people protest in that way in Sunday's election" (LABD. *NotiCen*, 2006). Some pointed out that the main conflict in Costa Rica's elections was centered in a discussion over a model based on a Washington Consensus that could promote the growth of the exportations favoring the interests of the country's oligarchy, but also the impoverishment of the middle class sectors.

The results of the presidential election with the conformation of the legislative apparatus offered a typical panorama of the new Latin American gobernability, where the privileged political space is negotiation. The Arias' PLN gained 25 seats of the legislature of a total of 57 members; the PAC was in second place and obtained 18 seats. The PUSC's surprise was also in a legislative level because, despite having been the ruling party in the last 8 years, it only obtained 4 seats; the Libertary Movement (Movimiento Libertario) had six seats and the rest were divided among the minority parties. If the CAFTA is taken to the congress to be ratified, the president would

need 4 votes more if the decision was decided by a simple majority; these four votes could be PUSC's. Nevertheless, a treaty of that nature demanded, according to several political opinions, two thirds of the congress' votes, something that Arias would never achieve. For that, finally, the president decided to impulse the referendum over this agreement with the United States, which turned into a whole political event in Central America.

## 5.3. PERÚ: Second chance for the APRA

The American Revolutionary Popular Alliance (APRA: Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) is a left organization since it was conceived and created by Manuel Haya de la Torre in the beginnings of the twentieth century. But since then it was maintained in a center tendency because it was contrary to the more radical left organization that was lead by José Carlos Mariátegui. Haya de la Torre could never be president of Peru; when the historical conditions offered him the opportunity of competing with an opportunity of winning, he died; in his place, the APRA designated Alan García, who in fact, with a progressive thinking, was president from 1985 to 1990. His presidential period, however, was a disaster and he had to face legal pursuits.[39]

Political life seems to have many turnovers because Alan García, in 2006, after Fujimori's two periods (plus the frustrated third presidential attempt) and after the frustrated hopes that left the government of the indigenous Alejandro Toledo, he was able to run as presidential candidate for the APRA. In fact, during the first electoral round, which took place in July the 9th 2006, he barely obtained the second place with 20,4% of the ballot,[40] clearly below the winner candidate Ollanta Humala, postulated by the Union for Perú (Unión por Perú), who obtained 25.68% of the votes. Humala would have been declared president of the country if the second round did not exist as an electoral law.

The 27 million habitants of Peru had an average income of $2.080 dollars; the UN's Human Development Index placed this nation, direct descendent of the Incas, in the number 74 with a big inequality in the distribution

[39] After his presidential period 1985-1990, Alan García, was impeached and had to go into exile and was out of his country from 1992 to the 2001.

[40] This second place was disputed with Lourdes Flores, the right's candidate suported by Toledo's government, who obtained 19,97% and was close to defeat Alan García and be able to compete with Humala in the second round.

of wealth. On th other side, according to the Peruvian Julio Cotler, as an independent republic since the nineteenth century, Perú has not been capable to constitute a full national identity principally because of the geographic lines that divide the three kinds of population: those who live in the coast, those who live in the Andes and those who live in the jungle.

The new president, Alan Gabriel Ludwig García Pérez, who came into power on July 28th 2006, replaced President Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006). This last one, despite his indigenous blood in a country with a population mainly indigenous, he could not do a lot after Fujimori's two consecutive periods in the presidency,[41] and his popularity started to decrease until it reached the 9% in the last months of 2004 (Cfr. Annuaire, 2006: 422). Toledo has the merit of his indigenous blood but he had an academic and political formation in North America, he is married with a foreign woman, and ruled his country under the free market ideology.

In the 1990 presidential elections, when the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa was postulated as a neo-liberal candidate, the image of Alberto Fujimori appeared once again, of Japanese origins but nicknamed "the Chinese", who offered an alternative program. But Fujimori lead to practice the economical postulates of commercial opening that Vargas Llosa enunciated during his campaign and could give spectacular strikes to the armed insurgence of Sendero Luminoso; he achieved a successful reelection in 1995 and attempted for a third period, which was frustrated by all the accusations of corruption and of an authoritarian system that was accumulated in his consecutive presidential periods. He achieved a relative economical balance and dismantled the guerrilla in Sendero Luminoso by putting his leader in jail, but failed in his ruling style. The indigenous Alejandro Toledo was next in the presidency until 2006 and continued with the implementation of the neo-liberalism's structural reforms with adjustments that, even thought they stabilized the economy and made it grow (GDP of 5,1% in 2004, compared to 4% in 2003 and 3,7% in 2002), also made the social inequality deeper in an scenario of institutional and political scandals. These two situations —big social inequality especially with the indigenous population and the governmental corruption scandals— constituted the melting pot for the new proposal of Ollanta Humala, with a left proposal with indigenous and nationalist characteristics

[41] Fujimori had achieved to be declared president for a third period in 2000, but the civil and political upraising made him flee the country and got refugee in Japan, admitting his Japanese citizenship. But afterwards, he returned to Latinamerica and was arrested in Chile and taken to Peru as prisoner, where he was still in 2012.

that asked for the total depuration of the entire country's political life. On another note, the electoral debates were profoundly influenced by the Free Trade Agreement that the United States started to negotiate with Peru since 2004. Not only was the Peruvian agricultural issue, which was terribly affected by the opening of the borders with the United States but also because of the polemic about the supplies of natural plants that the transnational pharmaceutical industry continuously uses for its medicines without obeying the demands for the national property rights. These natural supplies were taken out mainly from the regions inhabited by the indigenous population.

The predominant tendencies in the first electoral round, in April 9th 2006, were divided between three candidates: the right of the rich and white people with Lourdes Flores, supported by President Toledo himself and the predominant economic groups; Humala's radical left searching the distribution of wealth among the poor, more control of the state over the economy and denouncing the corruption of the politicians; the moderated left of the APRA was, indeed, in the political center, wanting to propose itself in the middle of the extremes. Humala had the clear triumph with his organization United for Peru (Unidos por Perú) with 25,68% of the votes. The issue arose during the decision of the second place because the numbers were so close: the difference was minimum but it was finally decided that Alan García (APRA) obtained 20,4% of the votes while Lourdes Flores (National Unity) got 19,97% of the ballot; the ideology of a right with the rich white people represented by Flores did not have the opportunity to participate in the second round just because of 64 thousand votes of difference with García.

There were, in total, 20 presidential candidates. The three that we mentioned were the ones that attracted the bigger part of the votes. However, we have to mention also the next places: the fourth place was obtained by the Alliance for the Future (Alianza para el Futuro) with its candidate Martha Gladys Chávez Cossío (6,23%); the fifth place was for the Center Front (Frente de Centro) with its candidate Valentín Paniagua (4,82%); the sixth was for National Restoration (Restauración Nacional) with its candidate Humberto Lay Sun (3,67%). The other 14 candidates[42] did not obtain even 1% of the votes.

[42] The other 14 candidates were postulated by the parties Concertación Descentralista, Partido Justicia Nacional, Partido Socialista, Alianza para el Progreso, Con Fuerza Perú, Movimiento Nueva Izquierda, Alianza Fuerza Democrática, Avanza País-Partido de Integración Social, Partido Renacimiento Andino, Progresemos Perú, Partido Reconstrucción Democrática, Resurgimiento Peruano, Y se llama Perú, Movimiento Descentralizado Perú Ahora.

In fact, President Toledo, with the results of the first electoral round and the uncertainty over who will be the next president, hurried up to sign the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, with the objective of wanting to engage the economy for any successor, urging the Congress to ratify it as soon as possible. For their declarations, the candidates that were going to dispute the second round had different positions over this national debate issue: Alan García proposed that the treaty be renegotiated while Humala wanted to call a national referendum to decide its approval.

Ollanta Humala would have been president if all was decided in the first round because he was the clear winner with 25% of the votes, a four point percentage over his contenders. But as no candidate obtained the 50% of the votes, the final battle would have to be between the top two candidates. Humala was defined as one of them, but there was certain institutional-political crisis due to the closeness of the votes between the second and the third place: the difference between García and Lourdes Flores was just a 4%. Humala, emphasizing a nationalist and ethnocentric ideology, had around 3,5 million votes more than his two closer rivals, showing the big resentment of the population against the president's Toledo neo-liberal political economy, against the corruption of the political world and against the interventionism of the United States especially in the production of coca leafs.

The second electoral round was decided, the 4th of July 2006, by the union established between the APRA (García) and those who had voted for the National Unity (Lourdes Flores), which preferred to build a solid block, despite their differences, to avoid Humala getting the presidency. Everyone remembered García's period as president from 1985 to 1990 as the worst in economic terms, but, as Fritz du Bois, economist in Lima, said, "He has turned by default in the candidate of the businessmen, of the markets and of the middle class. Ollanta Humala's message was too aggressive and hostile for the private sector and hostile in general for the middle class here that they had to make an alliance with García" (LABD, *NotiSur* June 16, 2006). The center ideologies (García) and the rights' (Flores) made a logical alliance and achieved their objective in the second round: 52,62% of the votes were for Alan García while Humala conquered 47.37%. But in geographic terms, García won in Lima and Ollanta in the rural sectors. "The final counting gave García 6.965.017 votes and 6.270.080 to Humala, a difference of 694.937. Almost 16,5 million Peruvians were able to vote and should do it for law, but only 14.468.049 votes reached the ballot boxes, and, of those, 157.863 were in blank and 1.075.089 were declared as null, leaving only 13.235.097 valid votes". (LABD, *Ídem*)

In the post-electoral period, the negotiation between the political forces came again but in a new correlation of strengths. Amongst representatives, because of Humala's triumph in the first round, the UPP party had 45 positions of the 120 that the Congress has; the APRA obtained 36 and the UN 17. Fujimori had to go in exile to Japan because of all the accusations against him, but his party Alliance for the Future (Alianza para el futuro) conquered the fourth place in the presidential election and got 13 seats. The rest of the positions were for the minority parties. The gobernability depended, therefore, of the president's alliances, that certainly was controlled by the right forces but recognizing and negotiating with the radical left of Humala's new movement. After García's term in office, Ollanta Humala could reach the presidency of Perú in 2011.

# Chapter VI

# An Heterogeneous Left in Ascent

*"Not all lefts are equal"*
(*Alternativa Socialdemócrata.* México, August 2008)

No one can deny that certain self-called leftist governments have come to presidential power in the recent years via the ballot box. However, not all leftists are the same because it is not a homogeneous block of governments, from ideology to building strong alliances. Even many analysts deny that some governmental leaders could be in the left political category; it may be the case of Lula da Silva in Brazil, watching the moderation of his government positions in the first period (2002-2006), some radicals thinkers saw him as a traitor to the left movement; Bachelet could be another case in Chile, whose government was exercised through collusion with the Christian Democrats, whose tenets have never been radical but whose outcome is a country having the best indicators of human development in Latin America; there is also harsh criticism to Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, due to the fact that he made a pact with the Catholic Church and economic elites, moderating the positions held in the early 80's. It could be also the case of Nestor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernandez as Presidents of Argentina: they both have been attacked by radical leftist organizations such as Elisa Carrio, who contested the presidency in 2007.

All these governments could be categorized on the left from its ideological principles, but differ quite clearly from the more radical leftist governments as Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba, but they can engage with them in new partnerships and consultations on alternative projects. Certainly it appears the project of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas

(ALBA: Alianza Bolivariana de las Americas) with the integration of several of these countries to which Nicaragua is added explicitly, but also the South American Community of Nations which is now known as Union of Southern Nations (UNASUR) has been born. With many internal problems, there also exists the project of integration of MERCOSUR, which also grows in economic treatises with the inclusion of Venezuela.

Despite the heterogeneity, it is possible to speak of a trend across the region. "Latin Americans perceive that although there is now political democracy, in the last two decades social and economic inequality have increased. The result is a shift to the center-left: Latin Americans chose other paths, or other promises, which stress the need to move towards greater equity and ignore the orthodoxy in macroeconomic management, which brought economic stability, but failed to create conditions of equity and in many cases, neither successfully promoted economic development". (Toranzo C., 2006)

The new topic is that the left does not reach the government's power through the use of arms, as prevailed in the second half of the twentieth century, but by the institutional route to electoral democracy. "In Latin America the postman on the left is calling for a second time at the door of history, nearly half a century after the Cuban Revolution, and he's doing that, not by insurgent violence and single-party system, but through the ballot of pluralism, as it became clear in the recent referendum in Venezuela that Chávez admitted his defeat". (Fajardo, 2008: 28)

The shift is clear, but the trend can not be regarded as permanent. The most important thing remains in the possible consolidation of these trends within the countries, in the period prescribed by their laws, because they will continue meeting and mixing with other country projects and the result every time has to come from the polls.

## 6.1. BOLIVIA: a surprising democratic revolution of indigenous characteristics

Because of the racist culture allowed by the Spaniards in the new continent, the Indians generally have been regarded as subhuman;[43] this natural inferiority —Francisco Ginés de Sepulveda mentioned that in the sixteenth

[43] Bernardino of Sahagún says on the Indians, in his introduction to the Real Comments of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega: "Thus they are considered barbarians and as people of very low carat". The priest Francisco Ginés of Sepúlveda also indicated: "The Indians are people

century—, made it necessary by God's will that they were to be subjugated by the conquerors. The Indians were decimated by colonial oppression and European diseases to the point that in the seventeenth century, the forced migration of blacks from Africa as slaves was necessary for the Spaniards as a workforce. Indians and blacks suffered in this historically racist view of the Western world, where, as Alexander Humboldt said in his Political Essays, "in America, the skin, more or less white, decides the rank of men in society". (Humboldt, quoted on INEGI, 1992: 9)

With this kind of cultural vision that persists until today, it is a surprise that a few Indians have come to have an important role in their societies. In México there is much talk about Benito Juárez, who became president of the country in the nineteenth century; to that level was also Alejandro Toledo in Perú and recently Evo Morales in the 2006 elections in Bolivia. However, it must also be noted that not all Indians are equal or represent the same interests. The word *Indian* meant only a simplistic generalization that sought to erase the many differences in the characteristics of ethnic groups and, also, the membership of a race not always represents the interests of it. The big difference between the recent cases of Alejandro Toledo in Perú and Evo Morales in Bolivia illustrates clearly these points mentioned above: the first one has the skin of the Indian and an Inca heritage certified but his government did not mean anything different compared to the previous governments; the second, however, is committed to indigenous interests and has the difficult job of trying to combine it with the interests of all the Andean nation.

Bolivia had in 2006, for the first time, a president of Quechua-Aymara Indian descent, born in 1959 and always connected to the path of life to people's movements and the general thinking of the left. But the tasks he faces now as president are enormous, not only in the economic field in which Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America but also in the political and cultural area, especially when the traditional oligarchies around the pole agglutinated near Santa Cruz de la Sierra, have interests affected by the decisions of the new government.

The country is characterized as one of the poorest countries of Latin America. 8.98 million of its people had an average annual income of $ 990 US dollars and a life expectancy of 62 years. The Human Development Index placed Bolivia at number 104, one of the lowest places in the Latin American region. (cf. World Bank, 2005)

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of coarse ingenuity, servile naturally and, consequently, obliged to be submitted to other peoples of greater talent, which are the Spaniards".

The Movement towards Socialism (MAS: *Movimiento al Socialismo*) elected Juan Evo Morales as its candidate for the national elections on December 18, 2005, where he clearly won with 53.7% of the vote and he was sworn officially as president on Sunday January 22, 2006. He had held several public offices: the Union General Secretary in 1985, the executive Secretary of the Confederation of the Tropics in 1988, chairman of the coordinating committee of the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba in 1996, congressman in 1997… But his life was never that of a bureaucrat because he was often persecuted and criminalized, especially for the defense he made of the cultivation of the *coca* plant, talking about the tradition of indigenous consumption without meaning the use of *coca* in other types of drugs.

In the political situation of Bolivia, the coalitions were defined in 2005 around two main contending forces: "The electoral scenario was occupied by the Democratic and Social Power (PODEMOS: *Poder Democratico y Social*), led by Jorge Tuto Quiroga,[44] who, far from understanding the shift to the center-left in Latin America, insisted on delivering more of the same: Structural adjustment and giving only some resources to the poor…; Morales capitalized the votes from the left, from former socialists, from people close to the non-governmental organizations, from intellectuals, from impoverished middle classes, from peasants and others who could not find a valid reason to vote for Quiroga. Morales got primarily supported by those who were tired of the old politics "(Toranzo C., 2006). Tuto Quiroga focused his campaign trying to cause fear on the electorate watching the prospect of the Morales victory; he was offering only the same that previous governments had done; Morales, instead, expressed harsh criticism about the previous governments that had led to such and disastrous conditions lived by Bolivians; he promised sweeping reforms in the economy and another way of practicing politics.

[44] Jorge Quiroga was president for a short time between 2001 and 2002, but then he was separated of his group Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN: *Accion Democratica Nacionalista*) to show a renewed face in a new coalition of forces.

**Results of the Presidential Elections in Bolivia: December 18, 2005**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | VOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Movimiento al Socialismo | Juan Evo Morales Aima | 1.544.374 (53,7%) |
| Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos) | Jorge Quiroga | 821.745 (28,6%) |
| Frente de Unidad Nacional (Un) | Samuel Jorge Doria Medina | 224.090 (7,8%) |
| Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) | Michiaki Nagatani Morishita | 185.859 (6,5%) |
| Movimietno Indígena Pachakuti (MIP) | Felipe Quispe Huanta | 61.948 (2,2%) |
| Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR) | Guido Angulo Cabrera | 19.667 (0,7%) |
| Frente Patriótico Agropecuario de Bolivia (FREPAB) | Eliceo Rodríguez Pari | 8.737 (0,3%) |
| Union social de Trabajadores de Bolivia (USTB) | Nestor Garcia Rojas | 7.381 (0,3%) |

*Source: personal data from the Corte Nacional Electoral de Bolivia. www.cne.org.bo*

Evo Morales won almost 54% of the votes of the population, among eight candidates, and then took over as president on January 22, 2006. Moreover, one of his advantages in the elections was having Alvaro Garcia Linera as candidate for vice president, who was a sociologist, a former guerrilla leader of the Tupac Katari. They defeated their closest rival, former president (2001-2002) Jorge Quiroga; the other two opponents of the Front of National Unity (UN), Samuel Jorge Doria, and the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), the businessman Michiaki Nagatani, achieved a meager voting. The participation of Bolivian voters in this election was 84,72%. "The absolute majority of the MAS shows that what happened in Bolivia was a democratic revolution, tied to a revolutionary history and connected with the construction process of representative democracy devel-

oped over the last two decades. In the 2005 elections, people voted against old politics, for change and for the need to link ethics with politics. But the vote also aimed to broaden the full inclusion of people and avoiding having a political populaiton, but with the challenge of achieving full citizenship, meaning the attainment of economic, social and cultural rights for all" (Toranzo C., 2006). From this perspective, the left ideology, the positions of autonomy facing the U.S. interference and in particular to the proposed free trade agreement between the U.S. and Bolivia, and the explicit links with Fidel Castro in Cuba and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela did not appear to be an obstacle to an electorate that already wanted significant changes in the economic and political model of the country. It is necessary to keep in mind, though, that Evo Morales, boosting his position against neoliberalism and against U.S. interference, does not represent Bolivia's extreme left, because other projects such as the also Aymara Indian leader Felipe Quispe, (MIP: Movimiento Indigena Pachakuti), demanded more radical proposals, although he only reached 2,2% of the vote in the December result.

The big advantage of Evo Morales was to have achieved the victory by over 50% of the vote because, besides the legitimacy, it also put significant support in Congress. "In the last two decades, no candidate won an absolute majority. Morales' winning closes a page in the political history of the country, marked by a fixed democracy and by the agreements in order to form a parliamentary majority and coalition governments, leading to read otherwise the governance. With the outcome of the elections, the new government has absolute control of the House of Representatives (72 of 130 representatives, but remains a minority in the Senate, where it owns only 12 of the 27 seats". (Toranzo C., 2006)

Either way, we can say that in Bolivia the discontent with an economic model and with the traditional local elites have caused a radical change by peaceful means through the ballot, heading to other kind of reforms. If the reform of the state in previous decades, and particularly with the recent presidents of the traditional kind —Jorge Quiroga, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and Carlos Mesa— has not resolved the fundamental problems of the population, especially the indigenous population, now through the same liberal model that sanctifies the electoral process it has been found a way to promote other reforms. This is the difficult challenge that has, since 2006, the new indigenous president Evo Morales, where three major projects stand out: the renegotiation of energy resources with multinational companies that manage them (Repsol, Total and Petrobras, belonging to Spain, France

and Brazil), the preparation of a Constituent Assembly with the reformulation of a new social pact, and the new relationship with the central regions, especially those like Santa Cruz and Taijira that demand greater autonomy.

The goal of MAS is not focused on a frontal attack against capitalism but, based on respect for the private property, radical reforms are intended to prevent wild application of the rules of capital. "The MAS program is aimed at the industrialization of natural resources, development of the domestic market, changing the *pattern of development* focused on the production and export of raw materials for others focused on industrial goods. It seeks *to end the colonial State* and democratizing it through a Constituent Assembly in order to create legal equality between different ethnic and social groups and achieve political sovereignty" (Orellana, 2006). In this sense, without being a radical leftist agenda, the new government will be looking for something that has not existed in Bolivia: the inclusion and political participation of indigenous people in the nation State, the expansion of the domestic market, the development of capitalism where national investors win but with a better payment for workers, a liberal, representative democracy with clearer institutional rules.

Three years after his election, there was a proposal very rare in the world: the president was again subjected to the polls asking people about a possible ratification of his mandate. And Evo Morales was ratified as president of his country through the figure of a plebiscite in August 2008, with over 60% of the vote, beating the support it had in the 2005 election. There was still a show of the right and extreme right expressed in the regional force of Santa Cruz and other areas looking almost total autonomy in relation to the presidential power at the center; they were explicitly supported by the United States with financial assistance through various U.S. agencies; in that context, Atilio Boron said that, "ratifying the presidency of Evo Morales will not end hostilities, blackmail, assaults, and destabilizing policies of the Bolivian right" (Boron, Adital, 2008). But on the other hand, the strength of an ultra-left opposition that would want to take the government to further radicalization of its positions appeared. Between both, there continues to be a popular support of Morales' government as the first progressive government in the history of Bolivia, which would be subsequently ratified in various national consultations made to the population.

## 6.2. CHILE 2006: continuance of the Pact among many different political forces (the "*Concertación*")

The history of Chile in the late twentieth century had the signature of General Augusto Pinochet's bloody dictatorship, who came to power by a coup supported by the United States in 1973, taking down the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende. The Chilean republic was converted, in fact, in one of the first Latin-American experiments so that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with its prescriptions inspired by Milton Friedman, prompted with efficacy its projects of structural reforms. Nevertheless, in spite of the long dictatorship (17 years), the country traveled toward a democratic system, from the referendum that Augusto Pinochet lost in 1989, although there were many institutional padlocks that permitted him an immunity until his death; the same general Pinochet remained like the leader of the army until 1998. "The political liberty was obtained in 1990 without mediating a restructuring of the Armed Forces and with the assignment until 1998 of August Pinochet as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army". (Moulián T., 2006)

Subsequently, inside the same electoral processes, the country traveled from the governments of the Christian Democracy toward the current governments presided by the Chilean Socialist Party (Ricardo Lagos and the 2006 election of Michelle Bachelet) in a scenario of agreements;[45] in this sense, it can be said that Chile has had practically about two transitions: from the military dictatorship toward the proposals of the Christian Democracy; from the Christian democratic governments to the proposals of the Socialist Party, although for diverse analysts, due to its moderated positions and the adoption of numerous elements of the neoliberal model for the economy, we can not speak about a radical left. "The candidacy of Lagos in the 1999 elections constituted a turn toward the left in the *Concertación*. As opposed to his democratic-Christian predecessors, Lagos was a socialist". (Navia, 2006) This situation probably reduced a considerable number of votes since for the first time after the dictatorship, the candidate of the *Concertación* bare-

[45] "The *Concertación* is a stable coalition that has managed to survive four presidential elections, succeeding over the rightist options… It is a matter of coalition that unifies the Christian democratic center with a part of the left, the most significant one since the electoral point of view reviving thus the collaborative situation" (Moulián T., 2006). The Concertación Project finished in 2010 when its candidate Eduardo Frei lost facing Sebastián Piñera, the new president.

ly surpassed Joaquin Lavin from the right-wing Independent Democratic Union (UDI) with a 0,45% of the votes and he had to pass to a second round to achieve the final victory with the 51%.

Nevertheless, one remarkable thing in this process is that the country has a stable economy and offers until today one of the best Human Development Index inside the Latin-American region. Its 15,77 million people have an annual income average of 4.590 dollars, and a life expectancy of 76 years. The country is ranked 39 in the Human Development Index (World Bank, 2005), above nations such as México and Brazil that have a bigger gross domestic product. In opinion of the Mexican Federico Reyes Heroles, if Chile continues on with the way it has taken, it will be the first developed country of Latin America.

In the Republic of Chile, the governmental continuity of the government was given from Ricardo Lagos with the Chilean Socialist Party toward Veronica Michelle Bachelet Jeria, from the same party, but in coalition with other political forces under the denomination of *Concertación* for Democracy. The elections were carried out on December 11, 2005, but with the winner not surpassing the 50% of the voting, the second electoral round was planned for Sunday January 15, 2006. In the first round, Bachelet obtained the 45,96% of the votes while in the second she became elected president with the 53,5% of the voting.

Bachelet, the first woman in the executive power in Chile, is daughter of Alberto Bachelet Martínez,[46] General of the Chilean Air Force in the government of Salvador Allende in 1973, who was arrested during the *coup d'etat* of Augusto Pinochet. Subsequently, Michelle and her mother were arrested and victims of torture in 1976, but they could escape to Australia and then toward Western Germany. She could return to the country in 1979 collaborating in diverse social movements politically opposed to dictatorship. She is a woman that had studied medicine with specialty in pediatrics but then dedicated herself to strategic and political matters and obtained, during the Chilean democracy, the direction of the Health Department in 2000 during the government of Ricardo Lagos and finally, in the 2002, the Department of Defense, before being candidate by the *Concertación* for Democracy.

[46] Gen. Bachelet died in 1974, in a prison of Santiago de Chile, in the context of the purge that Pinochet did to all those army officers who were opposed to the 1973 Coup d'Etat. According to the 1991 Rettig Report on human rights, Gen. Bachelet died as a consequence of the torture and abuse he suffered in prison. (LADB, 2005)

This organization was born in 1988 during the Pinochet government with the name of "*Concertación* of parties for the NO", being referred to the political refusal to the continuity of the dictatorial regime. "The *Concertación* of the Parties for the No"[47] was created at the beginning of 1988 as a coalition of 17 political forces and moderate rightist groups, central and left that were opposed to the dictatorship of August Pinochet" (Navia, 2006). It was a matter of an extensive group that included socialists, democrat-Christian, and other liberal, progressive tendencies and civil movements. Since then, this coalition is the one that has remained in the power of the government since 1990, having postulated previously Patricio Alwin, Eduardo Frei and Ricardo Lagos.

The continuance of this *Concertación* in the government has not been easy; it had neither an overwhelming popular support, since the right supporters of the Pinochet dictatorship still have strenght in the country nowadays. One must recall, for example, that in the 1988 national plebiscite, the triumph of the NO had a 55,99% while the 44,1% of the inhabitants wanted explicitly the continuance of the dictator at the head of the State. All the *Concertación* governments have succeeded until 2010 and, before, the right opposition in every moment it has maintained a high percentage of the voting. Patricio Alwin and Eduardo Frei succeeded in the first electoral round with a 55% and a 57% respectively, but Ricardo Lagos only got the 47% in the first round waiting to succeed until the second round with barely a 51%.

The Ricargo Lagos government, belonging to the Socialist Party (as opposed to the two previous presidents that stemmed from the Christian Democracy) had a great acceptance amongst the people, being maintained in a high level: "Although its level of approval, according to the surveys of the Center for Public Studies, passed from the 40% at the beginning of his government to more than the 60% upon finalizing it; the success of Lagos, the first socialist president after Salvador Allende, was celebrated greatly beyond the borders of Chile" (Navia, 2006). This was due to a large extent to the Chilean economic growth, to the achievements in the reduction of poverty, to the political consensus of the president and to the emphasis that he put in the intent to denounce and to punish the violations to the human rights

[47] They were 17 parties and associations that united to promote the NO in the plebiscite among which were the Christian Democratic Party, the main currents of the Socialist Party, the Popular Socialist Union, the Radical Party, the Party Radical Democratic Socialist, the Social Democracy, the National Democratic Party, the Christian Left, the Humanist Party, the Liberal Party, etc.

of the Pinochet government. "In his six years in power, Lagos carried on with a fiscal conservative government, commercially integrator to the world, technologically advanced, culturally and socially progressive, and politically in the left. The initiatives adopted during the decade of the 90s to reduce poverty were modernized and changed (in 2003, the poverty level reached only the 18,7%). But also deep social reforms were adopted destined to privilege the equality". (Navia, 2006)

Bachelet, coming from the same Socialist Party, had a good precedent in this context of government, but, by herself, she had difficulties to be shown as a capable woman rising to the head of the government. President Lagos, in the topic of gender equality, had shown a considerable opening upon putting in his cabinet an extensive number of women, because in Latin America it is certainly important to consider the figure of women in politics, surpassing the very own cultural bonds of the region to accept women as leaders in the high levels of government. "Bachelet obtained 45,95% of the votes, in the first round, surpassing the right-wing liberal Sebastián Piñera, from *Renovacion Nacional* (National Renewal), who obtained 25,4%, and also surpassing Joaquin Lavin, who obtained 23,2%, and the candidate of the Communist Humanist Coalition, Tomas Hirsch, who arrived to 5,4%. Although it was necessary to dispute a second round, upon analyzing the composition of the vote, it comes up that Bachlet surpassed the percentage that Lagos had obtained among women in the first 1999 round. With respect to their predecessor, the candidate of the *Concertación* lost votes among men, but improved among women (that historically had been the most difficult electoral group to conquer for the leftists)". (Navia, 2006)

Chile has gone consolidating its political transition toward democracy after the 17 years of dictatorship (1973-1990). The democratic model comes from the fundamental respect that was given to the result of the 1988 plebiscite, but great parts of the political system remained tied to numerous impositions left by General Pinochet. In spite of the existence of a large population that continues empathizing with the military dictatorship, transition to democracy continues advancing in a peaceful way and thus it has been expressed in the electoral process of 2005-2006.

**Presidential Election in Chile**:
**11 December 2005/15 January 2006**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | % VOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Party Partido Socialista (PS) Concertación por la Democracia. | Michelle Bachelet Jeria | 45,96 |
| Renovación Nacional (RS) | Sebastian Piñeira Echenique | 25,41 |
| Unión Democrática Independiente | Joaquín Lavin Infante | 23,23 |
| Coalición Humanista-Comunista | Tomas Hirsch Goldsmith | 5,4 |
| | | |
| January 15, 2006 | 2nd Electoral Round: | 53,5 |
| | Michelle Bachelet | 46,5 |
| | Sebastían Piñera | |

*Source: Personal data according to the Servicio Electoral de Chile (SERVEL)*

According to the Chilean electoral laws, the results of December 11 signified the planning of a second electoral round only between two candidates: the socialist Bachelet and the conservative businessman Sebastian Piñera. This last represents one of the largest fortunes of Chile, made during the time of the government of Pinochet (although then he was opposed openly to the dictatorship) and sometime he was a consultant of the World Bank and of the BID. Finally, Hirsch, postulated by a radical ideology of the leftist Communist Party and the Humanist Party, obtained the 5,4% of the votes.

For the second round on January 15, 2006, the perspective was not so clear for Bachelet, because Piñera and Lavin (this last one was the defeated candidate of the UDI) united forces against the Socialist Party, while Hirsch, of the Communist Party and the only one that kept an anti-neoliberal speech, declared that he would vote blank, denying his personal support to Bachelet. Nevertheless, finally in the date of the second round, Bachelet obtained a clear triumph (53,5%) on Piñera (46,5%), showing the victory of a national project that does not reject the commercial opening in the free commerce treaty but that has also a clear position to fight the social inequalities. In this sense, we are talking about a very special left in Chile because they recognize

"the free market as a tool for the allocation of resources; the Chilean leftists value and favor the globalization. Even though they insist on the need of a small but strong State and they privilege the adoption of public politics that may correct the inefficiencies of the market and help the dispossessed (particularly, on issues related to the concentration of the wealth); the Chilean left attributes to the State a regulating role before that of creating wealth… The Chilean left has lost the fear to the private initiative. More still, it celebrates and promotes the adoption of measures that facilitate and privilege competition… In comparison with other Latin-American parties, it is possible to affirm that the Chilean left has lost the fear to the market economy; instead it favors the market openly". (Navia, 2006)

Bachelet certainly represents a continuity in the economic and political Chilean model in relation to her ancestor Ricardo Lagos, but the projected imaginary that gave her the triumph in 2005 emphasizes two new aspects that did not have the previous governments: the interest to incorporate the civic participation in the definition of the public politics even more and the issue about equality between men and women. President Hugo Chavez, of Venezuela, indicated that with her, "A new South American project raises and it is indispensable for the salvation of our people… we have an extraordinary woman that reflects the new time raising in Latin America". (*La Jornada*, 12-III-2006)

She made very good things during his government, but his popularity fell during the students protest in 2006, during the tragedies of a landslide and earthquake in the country and during the 2008 economic crisis, but when she left the office 84% of the people supported her, though the constitution does not allow two consecutive terms. Nevertheless, the ruling Concertacion was divided in 2009 and she had to endorsed the candidate Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, who has been already president of Chile from 1994 to 2000 and belonged to the Crhistian Democrat Party. Frei lost and the Concertación lost the presidency in a runoff election in January 17, 2010; since then, the new president in Chile is Sebastian Piñera (51,87% of the votes), a Chilan businessman and a rightist politician; in the country it was then a shift towards the right, but Bachelet is willing to return to the presidency at the 2013 elections.

## 6.3. BRAZIL: the reelection of Lula

In the Latin-American region, Brazil and México, by their territorial extension and the magnitude of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), are especially important nations stronger than others that could have a better leadership in the region. México, nevertheless, by its geographical proximity with the United States, has been seen traditionally as submitted to the influence of its northern neighbor, while Brazil, in spite of its internal situation of enormous social inequality, is increasingly considered as a super power in the South American region.

According to L'*État du Monde* (2006), Brazil had a population of 186,400 million inhabitants and its GDP ascended to 1.461,600 million dollars in 2004. In the political level, after more than 20 years of military governments, the country could return to the electoral democracy with President José Sarney in 1985; Brazil, then, also experienced a transition from militarism toward the civil governments, although it was not the type of bloody dictatorships like those lived by Argentina and Chile: "The specific characteristics of its military state meant that the repression and the social control never reached the extremes of other military dictatorships of South America" (Palermo, 2003: 52-53). It was a negotiated transition between the military leaders and the economic elites where, since the beginning, there was the participation of the Workers' Party (PT: *Partido dos Trabalhadores*), created in 1980, and the leadership of Lula da Silva, who ran for the Presidency of the Republic in 1989, 1994 and 1998 and lost in all these intents. Finally, in the fourth attempt, the PT assumed the executive power in 2002 with Lula as the president, and was reelected again for the time 2006-2010.

Brazil is consolidating its economy with a great influence in the regional environment and also seems to be consolidating its electoral democracy, especially through the transition from governments of the Party of the Social Brazilian Democracy (PSDB: *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*) to that of the PT in the new century. We will try to explain this political transformation and its ending in the elections of the 2002 and 2006.

## Transition Towards Civil Governments

The Brazilian economic oligarchies supported by the United States manufactured the *coup d'etat*[48] on March 31, 1964 against the president Joao Goulart to put an end to his politics of social reforms, inside the international context of the cold war where it was common to accuse of communist any social reformer, as it happened with Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala; with the coup, the military dictatorship that would last until 1985 was established.

During the military period in Brazil and also as product of that, the educational work of Paulo Freire became world famous, especially through his works "Education, The Practice of Freedom" (1967) and "Pedagogy of the Opressed" (1970). In the same way, the important figure of Helder Camara, who became Bishop of Olinda and Recife in 1964, was known and recognized everywhere by his speeches on people's liberation, his commitment with the poor and his works in favor of peace; from this it would arise the subsequent movement of the Base Ecclesiastic Communities.[49]

During the military period, diverse election processes were carried out —three of them in the legislative environment: 1974, 1978 and 1982—, in an effort of the rulers to try to legitimize their program, but the elections were simply a fake event of the authoritarianism; for this pourpose, they created their own party, the National Reviving Alliance (ARENA: *Alianca Renovadora Nacional*) that then became the Democratic Social Party (PDS: *Partido Democrata Social).* "After 1964, the military state carried out, in several occasions, electoral processes for officials of junior rank while it also carried out a series of handlings including the change in the game rules after the elections to prevent that the opposition could be able to be in important offices of government. Doing elections is not sufficient; the possibility of

[48] In 2004, the National Security Archive (NSA) of the United States opened numerous documents and videos to the public in general, where the support from Washington given to the *coup d'etat* against Goulart and also the support to many other Brazilian soldiers during the period 1964-1979 is recorded. The excuse for this support was the context of the cold war and the fear of communism in Brazil.

[49] The impact of these two experiences in Brazil would be subsequently significant for the project of Lula in the party that carried him to the presidency: "The proposal of the PT… was related with the expectations of the Base Ecclesiastic Communities, fed by the Theology of Liberation, that systematized the principles guiding the relation between faith and politics… Lula arrives at the presidency of the Republic thanks to the social movement articulated in the last 40 years, in which the Pedagogy of Paulo Freire has more weight than the theories of Marx". (Betto Frei, 2002)

transfering the real power through the elections is a necessary condition of the democratic rules" (Drake & Silva, 1986: 273). In this sense, the true transition to civil governments was not given until 1985 in Brazil, although it was an indirect election through an electoral college; finally, in 1988, they had the direct presidential election of Fernando Collor de Melo.

The electoral democracy was negotiated by the military forces facing the international pressure and the ascent of the social movements that fought against authoritarianism. "The action of the social movements was important, not only in terms of its contribution to the end of the military government, but also because their campaign fortified the notion that an active citizenship was an essential component of the new democracy" (Palermo, 2003: 53); the non-governmental organizations would continue playing subsequently an important role in the public life as they did it then in the national campaign of numerous social groups demanding a direct election of the president of the Republic. In 1985, the military had to admit the electoral victory of Tancredo Neves, presidential candidate, accompanied by José Sarney, candidate to the vice-presidency. "The overwhelming victory of Tancredo Neves in the electoral College clearly showed which were the dominant political aspirations inside the Brazilian political elite and, implicitly, which was the political project that would prevail in the following presidential period: to build a New Republic, a full democracy, that did not put restrictions to the movements and popular organizations, and that had as economic orientation a developing nationalism renewed, combining economic growth and redistribution of income". (Salum Jr., in Palermo 2003: 283)

Since Neves fell in a serious illness and died on April 21st, before assuming the presidency, José Sarney assumed the first executive power in a temporary way and then in a final way in March-April, 1985; he was the first civil president after the military period. This transition motivated the official acceptance of organizations of the left and even communist; in that context, the work of the PT with Lula da Silva, that, in 1988, began to have the first experiences of local governments, started to take place: "Though the Party of the Workers conquered in 1988 the executive power in several regions (important city halls), the experience in Sao Paulo is perhaps the most significant, given the economic, demographic, and political dimension of this big metropolis". (Sierra, 1994: 21)

The new government managed to make a new Constitution in 1988 but failed in its economic proposals to face the crisis, as it happened to the plan Cruzado. Upon finishing the period of Sarney, with a good dose of popular

disenchantment about that first democratic government (because the expectation was not only for the purely electoral democracy but also for an improvement in the living conditions of the people contrasted with the serious deterioration of the economy) and with the insistence about the fear before the leftist candidate of the PT, Lula da Silva —who was postulated for the first occasion—, the alternative option for Fernando Collor de Mello arose. But the Brazilian political life was marked by an heterogeneous multi-party system: "The first presidential election after the dictatorship, in 1989, was disputed by eight parties, none of which managed to get a third of the votes, which underlined the multi-party nature of the Brazilian political setting" (Echegaray F., 2006). But De Mello would govern Brazil only from 1990 to 1992: he was deposed by his authoritarian form of governing and by diverse accusations of corruption. His proposal of a program of liberalization of the economy through the *Plano Collor* (it is the name given to a collection of economic reforms and inflation-stabilization plans carried out during his time as president) could never be carried out and failed the same as Plan Cruzado of Sarney. Collor de Mello was forced to renounce on October 1992 and Vicepresident, Itamar Franco, became President of Brazil.

Franco's proposals had a great sound of nationalism: to prompt the economic growth, to lower interest rates and to attack poverty. When, in 1993, the inflation in Brazil had reached the 2,148%, the government appointed to Fernando Henrique Cardoso as its Treasury minister, belonging to the brazilian Democratic Social Party (PSDB: Partido Social Democrata Brasileiro), who launched in 1994 the *Plan Real*, like a new economic program, that began to have an immediate positive way with positive sensitive consequences in the stabilization of the economy. The fall of the rhythm of the inflation was drastic only in the period of two years.

The popularity of Cardoso rose to giddy velocity and because of this, his proposal as presidential candidate was a total success. The PSDB had "a forceful electoral victory in the presidential election on October 1994 with 54% of the votes, defeating his closest rival, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, by around 24 points. The success of Cardoso in launching the *Plan Real* and his impressive electoral victory gave him a strong mandate in favor for change" (Panizza F., in Palermo, 2003: 78). But the change proposed by Cardoso was the transition from protectionism to the neoliberal model, as it was already being carried out in México and other Latin-American countries in those decades; he proposed privatizations, commercial opening and economic modernization to attract greater direct foreign investment. The first reforms were approved by the congress, although

subsequently others were stalling upon depending on the government from the alliance with other political parties, in a context where the constitutional change to allow the reelection of the president was also part of the discussion.

The context of the new elections of 1998 was still favorable to the personality of the national president. The effects of the neoliberal model in the macroeconomic level were clear: annual growth of the GDP, strong foreign investment and, above all, the control of the inflation. "The economic growth was higher in the 90's that in the 80's, and accelerated in the second half of the decade: between 1994 and 1997, the GDP grew 16,8%, reaching an annual average of 4%. The entrance of direct investment grew substantially and it is estimated that it reached 18,5 million dollars in 1997, more than the double registered sum for the two previous years" (Panizza F., in Palermo, 2003: 81). We must say another thing about poverty and inequality in Brazil: they were not attacked with this transformation in the model of national development, but the macro figures of the economy gave a lot to presume and to speak about the hope that sooner or later the wealth would be scattered toward the population. This is going to be the Achilles Heel of the neoliberal model that, with its adjustment programs in favor of the privatization, diminishing the state, the dominance of the market, etc., can arrive or not to stabilize the economy or make it grow, but never has intrinsic the objective to seek the social redistribution of wealth; on this point, the documents of the UN on the world development already have stated clearly that growth without redistribution is not development, and therefore, the programs of battle against poverty and inequality should be parallel along with the incentives to the economic growth.

The successes of the economic stability in Brazil during the 90s helped for a comfortable reelection of Fernando Enrique Cardoso in 1998, but they would not help for the continuation of the governments of the PSDB in the 2002 elections when the presidency traveled toward the PT of Lula. But Cardoso's neoliberalism was not the extreme savage capitalism; Cardoso, as a great sociologist who became politican and president of his country, had a great knowledge of the problems of the Latin American development as his writings in the age of the theory of dependence show, but he opted for the market liberalization, the privatizations and the adjustment programs without leaving apart the social politics as responsibility of the state.

"When, in October 2002, the UN offered to FHC the recently created prize Mahbub ul Haq, Kofi Annan reported that the juries had kept in mind the fall of the child mortality rate (from 38 to 30 for each thousand), the

attention of 50 million people in the network of medical attention at home, the increase in the number of people benefited by public services such as drinking water and sewer systems, and the advances in the battle against illiteracy (education rose from 93% to 97%) among other indicators. According to Vinod Thomas, director of the World Bank, the advance of Brazil in basic social indicators was, during the 90's, among the three fastest of the world. The estimates are that the expense in programs of social assistance increased from 15 billion *reales* (the current exchange money in Brazil) in 1994 to 30 billion in 2002, benefiting 10 to 35 million people, and with a more tuned-up focused point of view. Although the social inequality was maintained, the line of poverty descended from 42% to 34% and that of extreme poverty from 19% to 14%". (Palermo, 2003: 17-18)

In this sense, the political turn of Brazil toward the PT in 2002 did not signify a total breaking with the neoliberal model but a success of this party upon running since the radical positions of left from the 80s toward some positions of left center that did itself more acceptable in numerous sectors of the electorate, proposing not a total break with the past but a faster transformation through the perspective of a wiser social development.

In any way, it can be seen that the development of the civil governments after the military period has not been uniform. After the swayings of Sarney, Collor de Mello and Franco, where there was a true transition from a central authority to a decentralization with greater power of the states, city halls and local actors, the country has landed in a two party system (PSDB and PT) since 1996. Although, through the statements and ideology, both parties are situated in the left, it results clearly in this contradiction that the PT is more to the left than the PSDB and, because of it, in the playing of political confrontation, Cardoso is accused continuously to represent the right. So much to the interior of Brazil as across Latin America, the triumph of Lula in 2002 was recalled like a great change of political sign toward the left: his main PSDB opponent, Jose Serra, was defeated as it would be also in 2006 the same party with its candidate Geraldo Alckmin. Because of it, we can intent to analyse how was this second Brazilian transition after the civil governments in 1985, and maybe we are speaking of a more stable political trend inside the permanent swaying of the multiple electoral options.

## The Triumph of Lula with the PT

In the decade of the 80s and after the experience of Fernando Collor de Mello, the political situation in Brazil was polarized in two main options: the PSDB and the PT. This last one was a recent political party, created in 1980, like a project of various union leaders (linked to the main union association, the Unique Central of Workers, the CUT: *Central Única dos Trabalhadores*), progressive organizations of the Catholic Church and diverse groups of left. The figure of the old union leader of the metallurgical workers was symbolic since the beginning. During the first government of Cardoso (1994-1998), the PT became the main opposition party: in 1994, it obtained 49 seats in the House of Representatives and 5 in the Senate of the nation.

On the other side, the PSDB had also a recent creation since it was born in 1988 as a split of the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB: Partido do Movimiento Democratico Brasileiro), which came from the decade of the 60s when the military state started to permit some type of opposition. The main flag of the PMDB had been the transition to democracy where it played an important role, without wanting to be situated ideologically neither to the right nor to the left; in spite of the split, in 1988, of the group that wanted to form the PSDB, this democratic movement had an important weight in the Congress at the beginning of the 90's, but when it was set against the candidacy of Cardoso, it only achieved a 4,4% of the votes; even though, it was part of the political life of the country during the government of Lula because the former president José Sarney, of the PMDB, was supported by the PT for the presidency of the Senate.

The PSDB, adopting the ideological principles of the social European democracy, had during the 90's a giddy political ascent upon postulating Henrique Cardoso and arrived to the presidency with him, having also the direction of important states as Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais; in the congress, during the 1994 elections, it obtained 62 representatives and 11 senators. (Cfr. Palermo, 2003: 92)

In the political setting of the 80's, other important parties also participated as the Brazilian Progressive Party (PPB: Partido Progressista Brasileiro), connected with the military and with a right ideology; there was also the Democratic Party of the Workers (PDT: Partido Democratico de los Trabajadores), with a left center ideology and that had been founded by Getulio Vargas and dissolved then by the military; there was the Party of the Liberal Front (PFL: Partido del Frente Liberal), with a right center ideology and that had sup-

ported the Military. Later, the Socialist Popular Party (PPS: Partido Popular Socialista) also appeared, that was a transformation from the leftist Brazilian Communist Party after the disappearance of the old Soviet Union, but its path was tottering since in 2002 supported Lula as presidential candidate and in the 2006 supported Geraldo Alckmin, the main opponent of the PT in that year. In the same side of he left, one must mention also the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB: Partido Socialista Brasileño) that had been founded in 1947, dissolved by the military and born again to the political life in 1988; it presented its own candidate in the 2002 elections and supported informally Lula in 2006.

After having Lula da Silva as its candidate in three previous occasions, the Party of the Workers (PT) managed to get the presidency in 2002. But although Lula won the elections on October 6, 2002, there were not sufficient votes in the first round because he failed to achieve 50% of the votes, and because of it, according to the electoral laws of the country, the second electoral combat was transferred to October 27, when the second electoral round was carried out, only between the two candidates that had obtained the best voting in the first Presidential election: Lula had achieved the 46% of the votes on October 6, and Jose Serra, of the Party of the Social Brazilian Democracy (PSDB), organization to which the president Fernando Hernique Cardoso belonged, achieved only 23.6%. During the next day of the first round, Lula declared: "Yesterday, the 76% of the population voted in favor of a new economic model for this country… I want to thank the people that in this occasion did not fear the change", referring to the joint votes of the PT, PSB and PPS. (Cfr. LADB, *NotiSur* Oct 11,2002)

The strong victory of Lula was ratified in the second electoral round on October 26, 2002, when he got more than 52 million votes (the 61,27% of the voting) against Jose Serra, who conquered little more than 33 million votes (the 38,73%). Lula, then, became the president of the Brazilians[50] from January 2003 until January 2007, but in this date he took possession as re-elected president.

The strugle for the presidency of Brazil in the first round took place among various candidates; aside from Lula and Serra —they occupied the first and second place respectively on October 6—, Antonhy Garotinho, of the brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), an evangelical pastor that achieved the

[50] In the House of Representatives, the new government of Lula would have, nevertheless, the need to negotiate with all the other political forces to achieve agreements: from the 513 legislative seats, the PT obtained only 91, the PFL obtained 84, the PMDB achieved 74, the PSDB conquered 71, the PSB obtained 49, and the PPS 15. (Cfr. LADB, *NotiSur*, Oct. 11, 2002)

16,3% of the voting, occupying the third place, also participated: the party achieved 22 legislators (it would enlarge them to 27 in the 2006). The fourth presidential candidate had been Ciro Gomez, of the Socialist Popular Party (PPS), who remained with the 12,4% of the general voting. One must keep in mind that so much Ciro Gomez as Antonhy Garotinho, after the results of the first electoral round, they offered publicly their political support to the PT candidate, in an intent to stop the continuity of the PSDB with its candidate José Serra. The performance of the president Cardoso in his second period and the discredit of the economic model of the free market had certain consequences by the terrible crisis of the southern neighbor and associate in the MERCOSUR, Argentina, during December 2001. On the eyes of the voters, then, the possibility of a different option began to take place as the PT had already shown partial victories in municipalities and regions with innovative political experiences.

Finally, with an abstention of only 20,5%, that is to say with a participation of the 80% of the Brazilian voters (from 115 million registered voters, more than 91 million inhabitants went to the ballot boxes), Lula was proclaimed winner in the presidential elections of Brazil and, with it, he marked a significant point for what was going to occur in the Latin American region.

Who is Lula da Silva? Coming from a poor status in Brazil, Lula was a metallurgical worker for several years; his action among the workers carried him to be a general secretary of the union; he mobilized the union organization to the strike in a delicate situation during the military government in Brazil; he was imprisoned; afterwards, he got his liberty and, along with other sectors of the society, he founded in 1980 the Party of the Workers (PT) that, in that decade, began to have its first political conquests in local governments; he helped create the important Unique Central of Workers (CUT) in 1983. He did not have an opportunity of a higher education, but agglutinated numerous civil sectors against a political and economic model that, although it gave certain stability and economic growth in its moment, came to deepen the social problems of the country with the concentration of wealth in few hands and the increase of poverty to a large extent of the population.

Lula had been a presidential candidate of Brazil in four occasions; lost against Fernando Collor de Mello in 1990; lost again against Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in 1994; and lost once again against F.H. Cardoso, in 1998; finally he won the presidential elections in the second round on October 27, 2002.

Some people said that the big enemie of Lula was the market, specially by the agitation of some American spokesmen wanting to represent the

international finances facing the new positions that could take the new president of Brazil. Event hough, we can see that Lula and the PT have been quite skillful to arrive at where they arrived: they moderated their positions set against the international economic agencies, promised to continue paying the external debt and forged an unprecedented electoral alliance upon carrying as a partner Jose Alencar, a businessman of the Liberal Party. They formed a plural cabinet, with the intent to continue the stability and economic growth of the country but confronting the great problem of a small sector of the privileged population that have seized great part of the national income while numerous inhabitants do not participate of the progress. He did not announce radical changes for the country before taking possession but he began to exercise a skillful political pragmatism[51] that calmed down the market but he continued insisting on his social priorities.

One must indicate, besides, the large affinities of Lula with the project of integration in the MERCOSUR, facing explicitly the North American attempt of the Alliance of the Free Commerce of the Americas (ALCA); Lula said: "The proposal of the ALCA does not signify integration but an intent to enclose the Latin-American economies to the economy of the United States". (LADB, *NotiSur*, Oct. 11, 2002)

There existed multiple questions about the future action of Lula; nevertheless, he had to define a risky, delicate and ambivalent road: on the one hand, he had to guarantee the achievements already done by the previous governments that, in spite of the crisis of the *real*, they showed a certain stability and economic growth; but also, the government of Lula, due to the ideological nature of the PT and the background of the candidate and their promises during the electoral campaign, could not be equal to that of F. H. Cardoso. Therefore, large innovation alternatives and possibilities in the social and economic politics were opened; the decision of the voters had been clear demanding some changes related to the developed economic model during the past time; the historic background of Lula and his natural allies had offered an enormous political capital and they became an important element to produce a new face to the government of Brazil, in spite of the fact that the structural place to maneuver was very narrow.

Any way, we recognize that "the election reflected the disenchantment in many regions of Latin America with the reforms of the free market,

[51] Part of this pragmatism had been the election of Jose Alencar as his partner in the electoral campaign; in the same strategy was the appointment of Henrique Meirelles, someone experienced in the international finances and in the free market, at the head of the Central Bank.

that have failed in the life improvement of the majority of the population" (LADB, *NotiSur*, Nov. 1, 2002). Many people wished a significant change with the arrival of Lula to the presidency, as Frei Betto indicated on the great difference of what had represented Cardoso and what could represent the new president by the PT: "Cardoso is someone whom I respect due to his intellectual prestige, but I identify him as a spokesman of the elites and the multinational businesses. Cardoso has been identifed with the Consensus of Washington" (Betto F., 2005); but, different from the social democrats, "President Lula will surprise the nation, because he will adopt another powerful speech, with its own signature, as he did in the union and, above all, in politics, creating an ethical and combative party. It will not refuse the teamwork, mobilizing all the sectors of the Brazilian society, without being led to the creeping play of the fraudulent transactions and favoritism" (Betto F., 2002). This hope of great part of Brazilians and Latin-Americans was going to require changes and deep reforms contrasting the previous governments. As Emir Sader expressed it in that moment: "We had fought against the privatizations, we had fought against the neoliberal reforms that proposed less State, less social politics, less regulation, less labor rights, less formal jobs, less sovereignty, less public sphere, less public education, less public culture. We had fought against the cessation of the workers rights and of the retired people, of the workers without land, of the public universities, of the public health. We had resisted and in that day we felt that, in spite of everything that had been squandered in the country, we had defeated the neoliberal project of F. H. Cardoso; we had succeeded" (Sader E., 2006). Therefore, the new government should have something different.

## First government of Lula and his reelection in 2006

When Lula took his office as President on January 1, 2002, he was very clear in his speech: "The time has arrived to begin a new road… Yes, we are going to change things, with courage and with care, with humility and boldness… I am not the result of an election but of history. I am bringing to life the dream of generations and previous generations before me, of those who could never come to do it. I am going to comply with my objectives if all Brazilians can have breakfast, lunch and supper everyday" (LADB, *NotiSur*, Jan. 10, 2002). He repeated his purpose to fortify the MERCOSUR, building a stable and unified South America with a mature relationshi with the United States.

But, since the beginning of his government —and even before—, diverse sectors of the radical left doubted about his project as a chief of State. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, for example, made a methodological analysis of the state of Lula, at the end of March 2003, and wanted to confront the large expectations that had awoke the new Brazil government considering them as vain and product of people with little information, accusing of ingenuousness to personalities like Leonardo Boff or Frei Betto. For Petras and Veltmeyer there was not in Brazil neither an end of the neoliberalism nor a progressive agenda but simply a man and a pragmatic party that had forgotten all their initial objectives of the left in order to assume power; they came to compare Lula with the case of Alejandro Toledo in Perú, who started off as a poor peasant and bootblack and finished with a doctorate *honoris causa* in the United States and collaborating extensively with the World Bank. For these authors, the projects of the Brazilian government were well determined by the appointments of the director of the Central Bank and the officials in the departments of Finances, Economy, Foreign Affairs and that of Agriculture, all of them supporting the neoliberal model.

In May 2004, Sociologist Ricardo Antunes published an interview with the title: "The PT concluded its cycle as a party of the left". He affirmed that the economic policy of Lula had allied the country to the right and there was a subordination to the IMF and the international banking and, therefore, there was no hope to maintain the ideology of a socialist left; he mentioned that he and other persons as Paulo Arantes and Chico de Oliveira had determined to leave the PT, specially because of the expulsion of parliamentary people like Luciana Genro, Babá, Joao Fontes and Heloísa Helena. He desired then the formation of a new political group: "I think that the PT as government broke the Brazilian left producing an empty space that should be filled. In that sense, there is a pressure from the grass-roots organizations of the party, from the public workers; the PT treated all of them as enemies of the nation. PT did this not to the IMF neither to the banks, neither to the transnational nor their capitals; for the PT, the enemies are the public workers. These social sectors in clear opposition to the PT require the creation of a new political movement as a new party. On the other hand, the expelled parliamentary are figures of the social fight and they demand they should have a radical, political and anti-capitalist organization. I am standing with other intellectual marxists supporting this new movement, participating in it and trying that it could be a radical movement". (Antunes, 2004)

Emir Sader reflected also the deception of one sector of the left that had expected radical changes in relation to the government of Cardoso: "We never felt so much bitterness. Because one thing was watching the country torn up by the ones that had defeated us; another thing was to see a team in the Central Bank, completely alien to all the tradition of the PT economists, attributing themselves the right to dominate on what gave notoriety to the PT: its social politics. Another thing was to see the large businessmen to impose their interests connected with the farming-business-exporting, disseminating the genetically modified grain, on those of the people without land, the agrarian reform, the family economy, the eating self-sufficiency in our government. Another thing was to see the communal radios repressed instead of beeing supported, the alternative press to survive with great difficulty, while the government continued feeding the large anti-democratic monopolies of the private mass media. Another thing was to see the alternative software underestimated or excluded in favor of the large lobbies of the private corporations. All that, by our government. It was hard, it was very hard" (Sader E., 2006). Nevertheless, years later, Sader supported subsequently the reelection of Lula, recognizing that, in spite of all the defects and errors, the PT government had been better than the previous government.

Another example of harsh criticism to the new Lula government has been the Movement of the Rural Workers Without Land (MST: *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sin Terra*), whose mobilizations continued in the same proportion as they did with previous governments. This movement has its structural origin in the enormous concentrations of land and estates of Brazil, that leave numerous rural families without land. During the military state, there were conservative sectors that promoted the organizations of peasants so that they went to occupy territories far away of the power centers; thus it happened in some occasions, but the movement began to present especially the occupation of unproductive lands of the landowners in all the country. The Brazilian transition toward the civil governments offered the conditions for the creation of a stable formal organization that fought for a national agrarian reform and because of it the MST arose formally in the country in January 1985, in Curitiba, state of Parana, having a maximum organ of government, the National Congress. It was based subsequently on a demand based on the Constitution that permits to expropriate the land and to offer it to peasants that did not have it. Numerous forms of fight have been utilized: public demonstrations, hunger strikes, negotiations with authorities, occupation of unproductive lands, communal organization of

services in the settlements conquered, etc. They supported Lula when he was candidate in 2001-2002 so much by his left ideology as by the promise to settle down 400,000 rural families during his government, but little by little the MST[52] started taking distances from the president and his party, announcing mobilizations and takeover of land in April 2003, symbolizing the end of a honeymoon.

One of the leaders of this movement with 500,000 members and presence in 23 of the 27 states did the following analysis in 2005: "The Brazilian people chose the Lula government to make changes, upon voting for the campaign commitments program, distributed widely in all the population. The chosen government compromised also to promote changes, in spite of maintaining its understanding with the owners of capital. The political articulations of the government frustrated all and disfigured the expressed will of at least 55 million voters. There was an evil compromise among political forces, including the right conservatives, that assumed noticeable positions in the Central Bank and in the Treasury Department, Agriculture and Development, Industry and Commerce. In last July, in the middle of a deep political crisis, the government promoted a ministerial reform that reinforced still more the alliance with the conservative sectors. Therefore we say that this government is disfigured. We do not count by any means with the government elected in 2002. We do not have a left government neither a moderate left: we live under a government of center, while the right controls the economic policy. We must say good-bye to the government of the Party of the Workers (PT) and to its historic agreements… Today we have a state administratively maintained and organized against the poor, to attend only to rich people" (Stedile J.P., 2005). In spite of these criticisms, the MST decided later to support electorally to Lula in his intent of reelection in 2006. Subsequently, Marina dos Santos, the organizer of the great national march for the Agrarian Reform in May 2005, where the workers without land sought to pressure the government to accelerate the distribution of land said this: "We do not doubt that Lula is our friend. We do not want to break with him. What we want is that he changes his economic policy". (LADB, *NotiSur,* Jun. 3, 2005)

[52] According to the MST, the distribution of the land in Brazil is one of the most unequal of the world: the 20% of the population own 90% of the arable land, while the 40% of the poor peasants have only the property of 1% of the land. They reckon that there is near 4,5 million peasants without land.

Inside all this academic and political discussion on the course that the Lula new government would be able to take, the president dedicated himself to promote the reform projects judged by him as urgent and necessary for the country: the labor, political and fiscal reform, that about the social security and that about the retirement system. And for it, he began to exercise a true art of politics through the negotiations with the numerous parties represented in the Congress. On February 13, 2003, in the Counsel of Social and Economic Development he said the following: "Inside the general map of the income distribution, Brazil is one of the worst in the world, and this simply has not changed during the last 30 years… But we have a common objective: to contribute to do that Brazil approve the necessary reforms to surpass the current crisis and to return to the road of a mainteined economic growth and with true social justice" (LADB, *NotiSur*, Feb 21, 2003). And at the same time the ambitious program "Zero Hunger"[53] started, with the objective that no Brazilian would lack three meals a day, considering a subsidy in cash connected with at least one boy of the family be vaccinated and going to school, and that pregnant women had access to prenatal attention; it was a program with a budget of 514 million dollars for the first year and that would be accompanied by other activities to generate jobs, to assure the quality of education, to elevate the minimum wage and to extend the agrarian reform. Also, it added an immediate objective: to put an end to the modern slavery of Brazil, calculated in 25,000 people, located mainly in the majority of the Amazon states of Pará, Tocantins and Maranhao. In the international environment, Lula ratified his decision to strengthen MERCOSUR[54] and, at the same time, its ties with the nations of South America to create a common front against the imposition of the ALCA, the project intended by the United States to all America; this position would be ratified subsequently, for example, in the Consensus of Buenos Aires, that would be signed in October 2003 between Brazil and Argentina, in an intent to link

[53] The program "*Fome Zero*" delayed enough in starting and had many internal criticisms within the PT because some considered it as paternalistic, assistancialist and limited. There were, besides, diverse administrative difficulties for its establishment: Who were the needy families and how to transfer them the resources? With cash or with a banking card? How to verify that the resource would be really used for food?

[54] This would be a permanent course of action as it began to show in the XXIV summit of the Mercosur, on June 18, 2003, in Asunción, Paraguay; this position was more fortified with the presence of the chosen president of Argentina Nestor Kirchner and with the guest president of Venezuela Hugo Chavez. Besides, they asked a greater approach with the member countries of the Andean Community of Nations.

economic growth and social justice through the Southern integration with a different road to that of the ALCA; with it, he would arrive at the meeting of ministers of the ALCA, on November 20-21, 2003, in Miami; this meeting ended without arriving at final agreements and only devising a proposal of an ALCA *light* or flexible.[55]

In spite of the difficulties, upon complying his first 100 days of government, the 75% of the population approved him while only the 13% rejected him. Nevertheless, the tensions continued especially because the MST demanded with force the haste of the agrarian reform while the landowners[56] assembled militias to defend themselves against those who wanted to take the land on behalf of the peasants. On the other hand there were the reform projects and the agreements with the IMF. Lula seemed to have moved toward the center but could neither please to all equally. In September 2003, the government was shown in another controversial matter: it was approved for the rural producers the sowing of seeds genetically modified[57] for the following season, what caused an opposing reaction of the environmentalist movements that had supported him.

With all this, the year 2003 represented a phase of stability and economic growth, without breaking with the general frameworks of the neoliberalism but projecting to face the social panorama. Palocci, the secretary of finances, said in an interview granted to the Spanish journal El Pais: "The agenda is well defined for this year. It started with a monetary and fiscal adjustment to achieve the control of the inflation. When we passed the first six months, the risk of a galloping inflation will be eliminated… Now the reform of the

[55] Since that moment, it seemed that the United States saw as impossible to carry out its global project of the ALCA because the North American government dedicated itself to implement an alternative strategy in 2004, negotiating treaties of free bilateral commerce with nations such as Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Panamá and possibly Uruguay.

[56] Humberto Sa, president of the Association of Rural Producers of Laranjal in the state of Paraná, created a combative group anti-MST, criticizing the Lula promises of distributing land: "It is completely unacceptable that the government open the doors to a violent guerrilla group as the MST while refuses to talk with the rural producers… We are not going to remain with quiet arms allowing the occupation of lands to occur… Are we armed? Clearly, we are armed, and I would be an hypocrite if I denied it or if I denied the existence of an armed militia". (LADB, *NotiSur*. Jul. 11, 2003)

[57] In real life, he has to accept a fact already done since there were numerous lands already sown with grains genetically modified brought as contraband; otherwise, the government itself would have compromised by law to destroy 6 million tons of soy that were expected for the harvest season.

public pensions will be done, despite some opposition; we will move ahead. Then the fiscal reform will come and later the law that guarantee the autonomy of the central bank… Next, there will be other three reforms: that of the labor market, the political and the agrarian; this last is more a process than a law". (Palocci, El Pais. Madrid 16/07/2003)

During the beginning of his second year of government in 2004, the economic indicators of the country (inflation of 8,5% in 2003, stable exchange rate, external debt, growth of the exports in more than 20% relating to the previous year, etc.) continued continued to be solid, and the Lula government was congratulated by the IMF as an example of economic behavior, although the social policy was still questioned by some sectors because the achievements were not sufficient (unemployment was in the 12%, poverty achieved the 30% of the population, the Zero Hunger program had only arrived at 1,3 million, and numerous peasants continued demanding land). In spite of all, the index of approval for the government was quite high fluctuating in about the 70%, while at the international level his leadership was recognized in the world of the underdeveloped countries, especially by the autonomy of his project against the imposed projects of the United States and his impulse to the features of the South America integration, as was shown then in the South American Summit of 12 nations united in the great project of the South American Community of Nations,[58] in December 2004 in Cuzco, Perú. In the international environment Lula exercised a notable role prompting special relations with India, China, South Africa and with some Arabian countries, something that awoke anxieties on the North American perspective.

In the negotiation with the political parties, Lula had had a success upon achieving the approval by the Congress of two important reforms in December 2003: retirement and the fiscal reform. The first one was controversial, especially inside of the PT, beacuse upon pretending a stable, sure, and viable objective to maintain the system, some benefits to the employees of government had to be removed, for example, the age of the retirement had to be expanded. Lula achieved the majority support of his party but four legislators voted against and they were expelled: Senator Heloisa Helena and

[58] These 12 nations were the following: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela; afterwards, there were also Guyana and Suriname. It was a very important symbolic step although the presidents of Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina could not attend.

the representatives Joao Fontes, Joao Batista Oliveira, and Luciana Genro; but the reform had in practice an approval of the 80% of the population.

Moving more toward the center, Lula yielded two important departments to the PMDB: that of Communications and that of Social Security. Nevertheless, to strengthen even more the Zero Hunger program, he created a new Department of Social Development directed by Patrus Ananias, former PT Mayor in Belo Horizonte.

Nevertheless, in the middle of February 2004, the government party began to suffer a severe crisis upon being struck from inside by scandals of corruption. Magazine Epoca described how Waldomiro Diniz, nearby friend and assistant of José Dirceu —the second strong command of the government—, for the work in the Congress, asked illegal contributions to Carlos Ramos, a gambler in Rio de Janeiro. Besides, a video was shown on national television where both about asking Diniz for money destined to Ramos and the campaigns of two candidates to the government, where the first one required a commission of the 1% and assuring that the money would not be reported to the electoral authorities. Although Diniz was fired, the PSDB required the creation of a commission of the Congress to carry out an investigation. This petition was going to affect the political governability in the moment where the congress was obtaining a fragile equilibrium through the government coalition. More importantly, it was not a matter about Diniz but also on Dirceu, that had given Diniz the employment; the opposition began to demand also the exit of Dirceu, supported also by the surveys asking him out of the government. Finally the ex guerrilla and political prisoner —he had fought against the military during the 60s—, who had became professional politician of the PT and then leader of the Lula presidential cabinet, had to leave the position on June 16, 2005; although Dirceu returned later as a legislator, after some months he was also expelled from the congress[59] with the prohibition of not going back to professional politics until 2015.

Although the figure of the president Lula was not touched in that moment (his image itself will lose value in the summer 2005), the relation with the mass media began to be deteriorated. This was intensified even more, in August 2004, when the government proposed the creation of a General Counsel of Journalism that would have the capacity to be able to orient, to

[59] In December 2005, Dirceu, who had refused to renounce alleging that there was not any proof against him, was submitted to political judgment in the Congress and expelled; there were 293 votes against 192, although a simple majority among the 513 legislators had been required.

discipline and to supervise the practice of this professional activity; the reaction was harsh recalling the sensure times during the military governments.

The rhythm of the accusations of corruption in the Lula government did not stop because during 2005 the President of the Central Bank, Henrique Meirelles, would also be investigated by the Attorney General of the nation relating crimes against the financial system, evasion of taxes and electoral crimes. Similarly, during the summer of that year, a good number of leaders of the PT was uncovered in their illegal practices of exchange of large quantities of money with diverse Brazilian politicians. These scandals of corruption did that the ethical committee of the Low Chamber could ask the removal of 18 legislators; numerous leaders were forced to resign (the president of the PT, the treasurer, the secretary general, etc.) while Lula said he was betraied by these acts of corruption; he affirmed that he did not know before. The vice president Alencar himself, at the end of 2005, was submitted to an investigation by a deposit done and not reported in 2002 regarding a quantity of a million *reales* (some 454,000 dollars) in his business Monteminas; also the minister of Finances, Antonio Palocci, would face investigations from the Congress and would renounce his position on March 27, 2006, under the accusation of having accepted illegal payments of bets when he was mayor of Riberao Prieto transferring illegal funds for the campaign of the PT. A survey in August 2005 showed that in a possible election then, Lula would lose facing Jose Serra, who had been his opponent in 2002, by a difference from 48 to 39%. This was the most severe crisis lived by the PT during the Lula government.

In fact, a sample of the refusal by great part of the people to these corruption scandals was given when the government put to consideration a referendum in order to try to prohibit weapons and bullets to the civilians. If it is calculated that Brazil is found among the countries with more deaths caused by firearms —around 36.091 in 2004, according to the Minister of Health, when in the United States were only 30,000 in 2002—, the campaign of the government can be understood trying to prohibit this legal sale. But the referendum on October 23, 2005 resulted in an overwhelming "no" to the prohibition; the people considered that the government could not guarantee the defense against the delinquency and therefore the individuals should have the right to defend themselves. This opinion in the context of the governmental scandals was sufficient for the rout of the proposal on the prohibition; one must add also the massive support that the "no" received from the North American National Rifle Association (NRA).

In January 2005, the World Social Forum (FSM: Foro Social Mundial) was carried out again in Porto Alegre. The first gatherings of people from around the world for the FSM was carried out in Brazil, but in 2004 it changed the mass meetings to Mumbai, India, and they return again to Porto Alegre. From that year 2005, an execution of the event was decided no longer yearly but every two years and because of it the following was projected for 2007 in Africa. The FSM organizers in 2005 calculated the presence of around 155.000 assistants and they included so much the presence of Hugo Chavez and president Lula. Chavez had more support among the FSM multitudes while Lula received severe criticisms from diverse sectors; it remained clear that in the vision of this alternative movement, both leaders were in the left, but left people empathized more with the radical positions of Venezuela's president.

The discussions in the Forum were shared by both presidents: to defend the land and their natural resources; to build a creative culture of resistance with anti-imperialist actions; to defend the identity, diversity and pluralism; to fight for the human rights; the defense of the domestic economies; the fights for social justice and alternative democracy; the fight for peace and the demilitarization; the socialization of the new know-how and technologies; the impulse to the integration processes of the people, etc. In his speech in this event, Lula defended the economic politics of his two years of government indicating the stabilization of the finances and the creation of thousands of jobs, remaining Brazil like strong spokesman in the fight against poverty everywhere: "For now —he said— I am the president of this country, but my roots are in the social movements. I am a political militant". (LADB, *NotiSur*, Feb. 18, 2005)

On the other hand, the participation of all the American countries (except Cuba) in the IV Summit of the Americas in November 2005, in Mar de Plata, Argentina, was also another occasion for the government of the PT to continue expressing its affiliation with the Latin American left, insisting particularly in the processes of the Southern countries, different to the proposal of the subordinated integration found in the ALCA. Certainly, the governments that headed the Latin-American rebellion opposing the ALCA were, in this case, the governments of Venezuela and Argentina, but with extensive support of the other nations. George Bush, the president of the United States, arrived at Mar del Plata, by first occasion, in an adverse political situation because his only clear supports were Mexico, Colombia and El Salvador. There was, besides, numerous and significant demonstra-

tions of manifestations of the entire world in protest against the United States so much by the project of ALCA as by its armed intervention in Iraq. The speeches of Chavez and Kirchner were particularly severe upon indicating the historic influence of the Norh American politics as one of the main causes of the underdevelopment and poverty of the south region of America, and this has recently been expressed in the last decades in the severe programs of the neoliberal adjustment. A survey carried out between August and September 2005 among people of business, government and education, by the Miami Herald and the University of Miami, showed that only the 17% of the Argentine leaders and a 12% of Brazilians had a positive vision of President G.W. Bush.

Nevertheless, in a different way as Kirchner did in Argentina with an open clash with the demands of the international banking, Lula in Brazil carried an obligating relationship with the IMF, something that the critics of the left reproached him always. Nevertheless, the first government of the PT maintained stable the economy and controlled the inflation. The economic growth made possible that Brazil no longer came to need the supposed "aid" of the IMF: the credits with this international institution no longer were renewed in March 2005 —situation that had begun in 1998 with the crisis of the *real* in order to implement the prescriptions of the international banking— because, like the government mentioned it, the country already could walk on its own; the country has already paid, in December 2005, 15,5 US billion dollars to IMF, as also did Argentina in the same month, in order to have no subordination to the pressures of that international agency in economic matters: Brazil could do this without affecting its international reserves that were 54 billion dollars, as Antonio Palocci, the Finance minister, affirmed it The low inflation rate, the economic growth, the sufficient international reserves and the surplus in the foreign trade gave the bases to Lula's government to have more autonomy in the decisions on its development model.[60] The external debt continued to be an enormous weight but manageable in the measure in which it could diminish year after year.[61] Not

[60] One more example about the fortress of the economy was the government decision in May 2005 to advance the capacity of the country in order to enrich uranium as a way in favor to its self-sufficiency in the nuclear industry.

[61] The weight of the external debt in 2003 had come to signify the 58,5% of the GDP, calculated in about 201,4 billion dollars, according to the Central Bank of Brazil in December 2003, and that was the highest one in all the Latin-American countries. The economic growth was the great counterweight of the debt since the GDP had grown 0,5% in 2003 and 4,9%

even the renunciation of Palocci, the minister of finances, on March 27, 2006, changed the tendency in favor of Lula; the minister was replaced and Lula took advantage doing a re-organization of the cabinet in the prior period to the new elections.

The stability of the economic situation represented the best points for President Lula, but also, there were the social claims in the sense of not having done significant things to fight poverty and inequality. The disorders occurred in 70 Brazilian jails and the near 200 clashes of the police with out-on-the-street bands attacking public buses, bars and stores, that left more than 170 deaths during the third week of May of 2006, were the most violent in all Brazilian history. Another data was added for his critics and it was the referring thing to the deterioration of the Amazon region: on October 2005 a report done by North American and Brazilian scientists was published indicating that the deforestation in Brazil had been reckoned 60% less than it was in reality, comparing the data by satellite with the empirical investigation data in the field carried out by them.[62] All this ran parallel to the scandals of governmental corruption inside a context of immediate preparation of the presidential elections of 2006, where the opposition parties had a very high spirit on the hope to defeat the PT in the following electoral combat.

Nevertheless, in March 2006, President Lula had recovered the popular support for a second mandate. On the one hand, the appointment of the PSDB candidate influenced the internal fight among his opponents; the party finally put aside the most popular one, José Serra, Mayor of Sao Paulo and who had contended already against Lula in 2002, chosing instead Geraldo Alckmin, Governor of the state of Sao Paulo. On the other side, in the Brazilian people it was clear that, in spite of all the irregularities and vices of the PT, the president Lula never was directly involved in them and therefore the errors had not been his direct responsibility.

The Instituto Brasileiero de Opiniao Publica e Estatistica (IBOPE) indicated in its survey on March 15, 2006, that Lula would win with 43% of the votes if the election was that day, while Alckmin would only receive the 19% of the voting; in this same survey it was shown that if Lula would compete with

in 2004, according to the Center of Latin-American Studies of the Autonomous University of Madrid (www.cesla.com).

[62] The Lula government reckoned that this study published in the US Journal Science had exaggerated figures and affirmed that the deforestation of the Amazon had diminished to the 50%, thanks to its politics of protection on the zone.

Serra, he would receive 40% of the votes against the 31% of this last one (Cfr. LADB, *NotiSur*, March 24, 2006). This majority perception reflected what already had mentioned the Dominican priest Frei Betto, who had accepted to be an advisor of the president in 2002 but who left the governmental circles in 2005: the fault, he said, was not of the president, but of one sector of the party: "There was a political problem in the PT, where some leaders believed that the political methods of the right could serve to the left. The left fell in the trap to believe that the means justify the end". (Betto Frei, 2005)

It was not until June 24, 2006, when Lula da Silva initiated officially his campaign for the reelection as president, accompanied by the vice president Jose Alencar; it was his fifth presidential campaign, but on that occasion he was submitting to consideration of all the Brazilians his action of various years in the executive power of the State. His speech was clear: there is a lot to do in Brazil in order to break down the poverty and inequality, but in his government it was taken the correct road. "We have not done everything that we wanted to do, but we have done a lot more than some peoples believed possible… Again I am a candidate because the poor are now less poor, and they are going to continue having a better quality of life if the social programs that were carried out are maintained and expanded… In these three years and a half, we have shown to the world that a worker is able to direct the destinies of Brazil". (LADB, *NotiSur*, July 14, 2006)

In the Brazilian social imaginary, in the electoral fight, the recently appointed candidate by the PSDB in March 2006, Geraldo Alckmin, began to be presented as opponent to the Lula project, announcing cuts in the expenses of the State, improvement of the quality of the public investment and the impulse of better fiscal reforms; all this was forging again the clash of two projects: the return to the neoliberal project of more privatizations and the linking with the ALCA or the continuation of radical reforms toward a stable economic growth with greater distribution of the social wealth. In this context, radical social movements like the MST, although opposed to Lula in many moments during his government 2002-2006, announced again that they would support him for his reelection.

Alckmin's speech was centered on two points: to sow discontent in the economic environment indicating how it was diminishing the rhythm of growth and how with his adjustment programs it would be able to set right the country in a spectacular attraction of capitals and; on the other point, he tried to take advantage of all the corruption scandals inside the PT in order to originate greater refusal of the people toward the candidate of that party.

Lula's speech was centered also on two levels: in the economic one upon aiming, on the one hand, toward the consolidation of the achievements in terms of growth and inflation control (true facts in his first period of government) and, on the other, toward social programs that could turn more effective the battle against poverty and inequality; in the political level, upon accepting the reality of corruption that took place inside the PT with real actions to separate from their charges the disloyal leaders and upon insisting that Lula had never participated nor he had knowledge about those acts of corruption. Even the last minute scandal that revealed members of the PT had sought to buy with 770.000 dollars a dossier where Geraldo Alckmin was discredited could not influence in the electorate in the final way; Lula dismissed three key members of his team by this matter, including his director of campaign, Ricardo Berzoini.

A survey published by the Folha de Sao Paulo, on July 9th, 2006, showed that just then, Lula would obtain 45% of the votes while Alckmin only the 29%. Other surveys originated from other sources also gave the advantage to Lula but almost all coincided that he would not be able to defeat Alckmin in the first round and, therefore, they would have to go on a second round.

The predictions turned out to be certain on this point because Lula only lacked 1,4% of votes to get the 50%, with which he would not need a second round. Lula obtained 48,6% (46.662.365 votes) while Alckmin 41,6% (39.968,369 votes). The remainder presidential candidates was very little significant since Heloisa Helena and Cristovam Buarque only got the 6,85% (6.575,393 votes) and 2,64% (2.538,844) of voting respectively. These two last candidates had been members of the PT but with their harsh criticism to the breach of the promises of Lula, left the party and formed or joined with other groups; in practice, the votes of these two candidates impeded to Lula to win in the first round. The scheme of two main forces contending in 2002 was repeated in 2006, with two different projects for the country. Nevertheless, although the second electoral round was expected, in a correlation of forces, the PT and its allies did not obtain the majority in Congress (they only included 223 seats of the 513 total) and there was also the fact that the government of Sao Paulo was won by the PSDB with its candidate Jose Serra. "Although the PT conquered the presidency with more than 60% of the votes in the ballots, it barely controls 26% of the Senate and 29% of that of Representatives. Of the 21 forces that obtained representation in the Senate, 16 do not have a link with the alliance that supported Lula". (Echegaray F., 2006: 31)

An interesting fact in this election was the return of Fernando Collor de Mello to the national politics upon winning the seat in Alagoas, in the Senate of the Republic, postulated by the Reviving Party of the Brazilian Workers (PRTB: Partido Renovador dos Trabalhadores Brasileiros). De Mello had earned the presidency of Brazil in 1989 exactly against Lula, but two years later he was removed from the executive power in 1992 by corruption acts in contracts of public works; besides, the Senate had removed him his political rights for eight years. He was returning, then, to the national setting among Lula's opponents.

In any way, Lula, as it happened in 2002, won again with clarity in the second electoral round with the 60,83% of the votes, on October 29, 2006, having the support of more than 58 million Brazilians, while Alckmin only achieved the support of 37,5 million among the valid votes, the 39,17% of the voting. The 81% of the Brazilians in the second round had responded, inside 125 million registered voters. According to Raul Zibechi, in the first period of Lula government, "the social politics have been directed to the poorest and some reforms punished the middle classes and the workers" and therefore certain modifications of the votes are explained: "Relating to the previous elections in 2002, the Party of the Workers (PT) lost 2.1 million votes, what represents a decrease of 13%: 13.990.000 set against 16.094.000 four years ago. It obtained only 83 representatives of the 513 that integrate the House of Representatives, against 91 that it had in its previous period. The main losses of the PT are registered in the South (less 22%) and in the Southeast (less 23%), where it lost almost two million votes. In the state of Sao Paulo, the richest one and the most populated and powerful of the country, it lost a million votes, the 21%. Nevertheless, it grew in the Northeast (more 13%) and in the north (more 31%), the poorest regions of the country" (Zibechi R., 2006). The country had gone polarizing but, at any rate, a great majority wanted Lula again as president of the country.

**Results of the presidential election**
**October 1, 2006/ October 29, 2006**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | RESULTS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | First round | Second round |
| Dos Trabalhadores, Republicano Brasileiro, Comunista do Brasil | Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva | 48,6% | 60,83% |
| Social Democracia Brasileira, Frente Liberal | Geraldo Alckmin | 41,6% | 39,17% |
| Socialismo e Liberdade, Partido Socialista Unificado Dos Trabalhadores, Partido Comunista Brasileño | Heloisa Helena Lima de Moraes Carvalho | 6,85% | |
| Democratico Trabalhista | Cristovam Buarque | 2,64% | |
| Republicano Progressista | Ana Maria Rangel | 0,13% | |
| Socialdemocrata Cristao | Jose Maria Eymael | 0,07% | |
| **SOCIAL LIBERAL** | | | |
| Total Electors | 125.912.656 | | |
| Total Voters | 104.820.145 | | |
| Total valid votes | 95.996.733 | | |
| Abstentionismo | | 16,75% | |

*Source: Data from the Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE), Brazil.*

The features of the second government of Lula were exposed in his speech of victory after the second electoral round and they can be synthesized in three elements: development, education and battle against poverty. "We are going to do many better things in this second phase of government than what we did in the first one… We are going to continue governing Brazil for the benefit of all, but we are mainly going to pay attention to those that need it the most. The poor one will have the preference in our government… The name of my second mandate will be development, development with income distribution and quality in educa-

tion". And attending to the facts of registered corruption in his first government, he indicated categorically: "All the accusations on corruption will be fully investigated, and the guilty will be punished". (LADB, *NotiSur*, Nov., 3, 2006)

Again, as in 2002, a great hope in the government was placed again on Lula, but, as opposed to that moment, a big part of the utopia on the radical and immediate changes was removed. Emir Sader, that had felt great deception during the first government of Lula, showed again his enthusiasm by the President reelection in 2006: "We win the right to fight, to fight for a government that at last promote the priority of the social topic, that could be a post neoliberal government, working for the construction of democracy with social soul. We celebrate, because we deserve the victory, in spite of our mistakes. But to be at the level of our victory, we must make this a victory of the left. A victory that could be at the height of the exciting support that the government received, along all the campaign, from the poorest, from the most marginalized, from the ones that constitute the extensive majority of the Brazilians, from the ones that work more and earn less. From the ones that knew, like nobody, to resist the torrent of publicity that the mass average diffused everywhere. Making the new government, especially the government of them. Of all the Brazilians, but specially of the ones that have always been marginalized, excluded, repressed, that always lived and died surviving, in the anonymity, in the silence, in the abandonment". (Sader E., 2006)

## Final considerations

Lula's second triumph upon achieving the reelection as a president of Brazil was clear in the first and so much in the second rounds. And in the Latin-American region, at the end of that year, this situation was accompanied, in a simultaneous way, by the victories of Daniel Ortega, of the FSLN in Nicaragua, of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and the reelection of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Nevertheless, it did not signify a final and convergent tendency toward a new course of the region because their programmatic points were not necessarily the same neither the triumph in each country was an overwhelming victory.

It is necessary, then, to indicate an important conclusion for Brazil but also for the remainder of the Latinamerican countries. The position that succeeds in the executive power no longer can be an omnipotent presidency but the winner has to sit down to negotiate with all the other political forces to be able to implement the reforms intended. "The federal government should forget any absolutist aspiration and it should be willing to negotiate with the other forces,

strengthen the checks and balances. The voter decides strategically, and his priority seem to be to minimize the concentration of power, what places serious impediments to the exercise of an imperial presidency". (Echegaray F., 2006: 31)

On the other hand, the economic context of the people will always be important, that conditions the possibilities of any politician to arrive or to continue in his post in an electoral-democratic model; it is all due to the voters. In this manner, the economic growth, the financial stability, the perception on the possible improvement of the living conditions,… will always be an important factor beyond the hard vote that surrounds each one of the parties. In the case of Brazil, the voters judged that, in spite of the corruption scandals of the party in the government, the president would be able to continue a tendency that already had experienced as positive in his first phase of government. In other circumstances, the punishment vote could exist. In this sense, Leonardo Boff commented on the ethical character of the political projects of the candidates: "In what measure he can break with the tradition of privileges that have characterized the Brazilian politics and what mediations will he use to promote the justice and the inclusion of the millions dispossessed. This is the knot of the question. The citizens have the right to know the political projects of each candidate and the forms to carry them" (Boff L., 2006). In this manner, we should have trust in the possibilities of a democratic system where one must let the voters decide the course of their own country; one must have confidence that the voters will ratify the PT government or they will remove it from the government in the case the party does not comply with the fundamental promises of the campaign. This should be the permanent challenge of the left and right and regional scales. As well as they could be well distinguished in 1994 and 98 the two proposals of Cardoso-Lula, also they could be well distinguished the different features of the proposals of Lula-Serra in 2002 and Lula-Alckmin in 2006.

## 6.4. ECUADOR: Overcoming a Restricted Democracy

*"Latin America and the Ecuador are not living an epoch of changes; they are living a true change of epoch".*

(Rafael Correa. *First Speech as president,* 15 January 2007)

The Ecuador, during 1978, was a lot distant from today's Ecuador. I indicate the distance of 30 years because that was the first time I knew that

country traveling through in bus from the south to the north; it was my first experience in Central and South-America, including Perú, Colombia, Venezuela and all the Central American countries. At that time, the transition to democracy after a decade of militarism was just taking place; besides, it was also the experience of another transition: from the protectionist economic model toward the free market economy with its neoliberal characteristics and the programs of adjustment. On the other hand, although the Andean Pact among the governments of Colombia, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Perú had been signed in May of 1969 as an agreement of subregional integration, the dream of Simon Bolivar still had not so much impact.

Ecuador had become a civil dictatorship when José María Velasco Ibarra, who had earned the presidential elections in 1968, dissolved the congress in 1970; nevertheless, he was ousted by the armed forces in a bloodless *coup d'etat* in February 1972, being proclaimed for the military a nationalist and revolutionary government under the direction of the General Guillermo Rodriguez Lara, who would be substituted in 1976 by a Military triumvirate. The so called democratic governments would begin in Ecuador with the referendum in 1978 that initiated the return to the electoral processes where Jaime Roldos Aguilera was elected, but died on an airplane accident in 1981 and was substituted by the then Vice President Osvaldo Hurtado.

This country, after the epoch of one of the biggest Latin-American *caudillos*, José María Velasco Ibarra (he was the president of the country five times), ousted by some military coups, has maintained its democratic system for more than two decades, but with successive convulsions that catalogue it until 2006 as an unstable democracy inside the Latin-American context, where the elections already seem to be in general the peaceful method for the successions of power but without resolving the huge problems of social inequality and generalized corruption.

In 1979, the transition from military dictatorships to the chosen civil governments in electoral processes was achieved when Jaime Roldos conquered the presidency; but Roldos died in 1981 and the presidency was occupied by the vice president Osvaldo Hurtado to comply the period of 4 years until 1984. The following presidential period was leaded by Leon Febres Cordero, of the Christian democracy, who could finish his four years in 1988.

The following president, Rodrigo Borja (1988-1992), of the Social Democracy, could govern with certain peace. Another conservative returned, President Sixto Durán Ballén, who initiated with intensity the time of privatizations, but also he complied with his 4 years of government although suf-

fering tensions by the military conflict in 1995 with the neighboring Peru, governed then by Alberto Fujimori.

Subsequently in 1996, the Christian Democracy arrived again at the presidency with the singular president Abdala Bucaram, chosen democratically but who could only remain 6 months in the executive power due to the massive protests of the population; the legislators dismissed him for "mental incapacity" in the following year 1997 and they appointed, as an interim leader of government, Fabian Alarcon. During the period of Alarcon, a Constituent Assembly in 1998 was carried out to proceed then to general elections, where Jamil Mahuad was chosen. Nevertheless, this new president could only remain in the executive power during a year and a half; the economic crisis was the favorable setting for a military, native, and popular revolt that was generalized in the country and obliged Mahuad to abandon his post at the beginning of the year 2000. With it, the vice president Gustavo Noboa could arrive at the executive power where he was maintained until the electoral process of 2002. Ecuador was living in all these processes a weak electoral democracy with many presidents who could not offer a political neither economic stability and, with it, the pressures and the popular movements obliged them to abandon the position without finishing the period for which they had been chosen.

The 20th century was finishing with an Ecuador that could presume to be living an electoral democracy but to which Agustin Cueva[63] could apply the concept of "Restricted Democracy" similar to the situation of other Latin-American countries that with civil governments did not experience improvement in the people's standard of living neither a consolidation of their national political institutions. "On the threshold of its five hundred years of Latin American existence, this America racially mixed is found… floating, as never, to the drift, without an historical profile neither an economic and political project that could define it. This happens in a complex international context characterized by the ruthless restructuring of the domination system with the hegemony of the United States, as well as by the sharp crisis in which the almost totality of the socialist world is debated"

[63] Professor Cueva was a professor investigator of the Center of Latin-American Studies of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the UNAM and he wrote a book that is now a classic: "The development of the capitalism in Latin America"; he wrote more about the new Latin-American democracies in his book "The restricted democracies of Latin America". About his own country, we have his book "The process of political domination in Ecuador". In spite of the harshness of his analysis, when I knew him in Guadalajara, México, showed his optimism about the future of the region.

(Cueva, 1989: 8). Really, when we see a country that in 10 years (from 1996 to 2006) has had 8 presidents, the fragility of these Latin American democracies is no surprise, the ones that Rafael Correa has mentioned as "plasticine democracies". (Correa R., 15-I-2007)

The transformation of Ecuador has been accelerated and changing in the rising 21st century; this is the process we will try to analyze in the present chapter in order to understand how the proposal of a post neoliberal model has strong roots in the Rafael Correa government, triumphant in the presidential elections of 2006.

## The Uprisings of the New Century

The new century for Ecuador began with an extensive popular revolt that resulted in the resignation of the president Jamil Mahuad. The Mahuad government had originated the crisis with the Law of Rationalization and Restructuring of the public Finances, that signified in practice the privatization of electricity, petroleum and telecommunications, at the same time that the taxes rose and especially to gasoline in a 107%. Popular mobilizations occurred in March and July 1999 and agglutinated extensive sectors of the population as peasants, students, petroleum workers, social security workers, cabdrivers, truckers and, specially, native people.

"We are talking about a country with 12,5 million inhabitants, from which among 25 and 45% is native, and 80% is rural population living in extreme poverty. Since 1996, year in which Ecuador entered to the World Organization of Commerce, a strong devaluation of the currency was imposed. In February 1997, a popular revolt ousted the then president Abdala Bucaram and in 1998, after a brief period of provisional government, Jamil Mahuad, of the Popular Democracy Party, took on the job as president in conditions of technical tie". (Vera H. R., 2000)

The demonstrations occurred in the capital and in the most important places of the country that paralyzed it from January 18 to 23, 2000 brought the downfall of president Mahuad. There was the aspiration of some leaders of the movement to oust also the three powers of the country in order to go toward a democratic government, but finally only the fall of the president happened that was found in a state of great disorder,[64] so much by its alli-

[64] Among the orders shouted daily during the days of demonstrations the following was seen: "Thief silver Jamil, devil Jamil, dark Jamil, *chupacabras* Jamil, arisen from hell Jamil, death of the people Jamil…" The people also sang in the streets: "Bankers and businessmen, merce-

ances with the economic oligarchy as by the submission to the government of the United States.

The ascent of the popular movement was declared in a special way on January 21, 2000 when the calling for a National Parliament for the People, with 44 delegates of the 22 Ecuadorian provinces managed to be in session in the precinct of Congress naming a National Salvation Junta that designated the Colonel Lucio Gutierrez (officer that along with other commanders of the Army, had supported the revolt) as President, Antonio Vargas as President of the Popular Parliament and Carlos Solórzano as Chief of the Supreme Court of Justice.

The president of the Republic lacked the support of the Army and had to resign, but the negotiations between military and the economic and political elites did not favor the National Salvation Junta and appointed Gustavo Novoa, who has been vice president and then became president. It was a political earthquake in the Ecuadorian system and there was a real change of command in the nation, the same model remained only with another person at the head of the government. The strength of the revolt was situated in the so called National Parliament of the People (integrated by the Confederation of Native Nationalities of Ecuador and by the Coordination of Social Movements) and in the Patriotic Front of National Unity; its achievement was the fall of the president and the stupor caused to the economic oligarchy, to the international financial agencies and to the U.S. Government.[65]

Nevertheless, the big economic and political problems remained with the new Noboa government; he only had to finish the period of his predecessor and, because of it, the presidential succession in 2002 came quickly.

The elections occurred on October 20, 2002, in Ecuador and there was not a winning candidate:

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nary sons of a bitch, with the silver of the poor, millionaires you were made". "We do not want and we do not desire to be a North American colony". (Vera H., 2000)

[65] On November 12, 1999, the Ecuador government signed with the United States an agreement: the northamerican soldiers could use for ten years the air base of Manta with all its harbor installations, enjoying diplomatic immunity and facilitating all kind of importings and export of goods, supporting even the operations of the Plan Colombia.

**Ecuador 2002 elections**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lucio Edwin Gutiérrez Borbua FSP /MUPP-NP | 913.113 | 20,43% |
| Álvaro Fernando Noboa Ponton PRIAN | 776.132 | 17,37% |
| León Roldós Aguilera RP | 689.438 | 15,43% |
| Rodrigo Borja Cevallos ID | 627.501 | 14,04% |
| Antonio Xavier Neira Menéndez PSC | 544.335 | 12,18% |
| Jacobo Bucaram Ortíz PRE | 529.938 | 11,86% |

*Source: Tribunal Supremo Electoral del Ecuador.*

There was a need of a second electoral round because no candidate had the required majority and it was not until then when Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, 45 years old, defeated in the second round, on November 24, 2002, his opponent Álvaro Noboa. Gutiérrez took the executive power of Ecuador on January 15, 2003, planning to be 4 years in the presidency.

The organization that postulated Gutiérrez to the presidency, the Party of Patriotic Society on January 21st (supported by the native organization Pachakutik) had defeated the party of Noboa, the Reviving Institutional National Action Party (PRIAN: Partido Renovador Institucional Accion Nacional); both organizations represented the failure of all the previous traditional political parties, since both had been of recent creation wanting to represent the longings for change in many Ecuadorian people.

The 52 year old multimillionaire Álvaro Noboa, the richest man of Ecuador, accepted his rout, when the Supreme Electoral Court recognized Gutierrez's advantage with 54% of the votes while his own votes only reached the 45%. The president of Ecuador, Gustavo Noboa, also recognized the triumph of Gutierrez.

Ecuador history, the last decades showed the political fragility of the country with its almost 13 million inhabitants, in a context where high levels of poverty are recognized specially in the dense native population (65% of the Ecuadorians live in poverty, according to some analysts), and with an external debt of 14 thousand million dollars, the highest of Latin America if we consider the relation with the population and the gross domestic product. "The minimum wage is 50 dollars a month, an income that, in the Unit-

ed States and Europe, 2 million Ecuadorians emigrated in recent years can obtain in two or three days. The unemployment affects 10% of the active population (330 thousand people) and the sub-employment 32% (a million 123 thousand). It is a context in which other indicators (child and maternal mortality, health, illiteracy, education, environmental contamination) are elevated exponentially, and the dollarization has not been able to reduce the terminal magnitude of the crisis… In December 2001, the inflation reached 22,5% (but in dollars!), almost ten times more than the U.S. inflationary level" (Steinsleger J., *La Jornada*. 25-XI-2003). It should be added to this situation the economic subjection from the country to the international financial agencies that squeezed the country with costly interests: "Twenty-three years paying external debt means that between the 40 and 50% of the budget goes toward the international banking and the holders of the debt; other thing happens: the multiple practices of corruption specially in the high levels of the private and official spheres, leaving in patches what is destined to the social reproduction of society. They take the cake (the international banking and the native oligarchic circles); the crumbs barely remain for the people". (Hidalgo F.F., 2005)

Ecuador was considered by the United Nations in 2002 in the 94th place (among 173 countries) under the criteria indicated in the Human Development Index, watching income, health and education.

Gutiérrez acquired great notoriety during the popular, militar and native revolt in 2000: he maintained a left ideology, with positions against the neoliberal model in Latin America and against the dollarization of the country that had been decreed by Mahuad; he expressed also a great opposition to the North American project of the Alliance for the Free Commerce of the Americas (ALCA: Alianza para el Libre Comercio de las Americas), an opposition to the influence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and he maintained in his speeches a strong linking with the interests of the natives as the majority population in Ecuador. Gutierrez had been imprisoned during 5 months after the intent of the *coup d'etat* on January 2000; nevertheless, since then, he was launched to the political and electoral fight with his new political party, being linked with almost all the groups of left when he was presented as presidential candidate in 2002: having voted 71% of the 8,1 million voters recorded, he conquered 54%.

The triumph of the former colonel was only possible due to the historic block of political alliances that flowed for the electoral process of 2002; the

driving forces of his candidacy was the Movement of Multinational Unit Pachakutik New Country and the Patriotic Society January 21 Party.

Gutiérrez's figure and his electoral campaign is similar —although by different reasons— to Hugo Chávez's in Venezuela and Lula's in Brazil. Gutiérrez's intent of a *coup d'etat* resembles him clearly to Chavez; the alliances with the popular and native movements are similar to those made by Lula. Gutiérrez maintained a frontal verbal refusal to the Latinamerican neoliberal model, that has not resolved the problems of the economic growth neither the uneven distribution of social wealth. Many analysts can compare Gutiérrez with Chávez due to the military uprising and by the circumstances that put them both in prison by some time; nevertheless, although the Ecuadorian emphasized also in his speech the interests of the majorities impoverished, he did not want to be situated explicitly in public with Hugo Chávez's image.

The demands of the popular sectors to the Gutierrez government in Ecuador were many due, in part, to the multiple promises during his electoral campaign: better distribution of wealth, recognition of the Ecuadorian multinational character, recognition of the native languages, a multicultural education, better health and medicine systems integrating the Andean and Western knowledge, a participatory budget, the harmonization of the national and native legislations, etc. Some of his main political allies were the native communities of Ecuador that are some of the best organized in the Latinamerican region.

Gutiérrez government quickly began to forget its promises of campaign, especially toward the popular and native groups. The U.S. government, the IMF, the petroleum companies, the large businessmen of Ecuador, the groups of the right, etc. began to exercise pressure. The candidate defeated, Noboa, representing the 45% of the voters supported also an opposing front. In the Congress there was a contrary parliamentary majority facing Gutiérrez, including the former president Leon Febres Cordero as president of the Parliament, who had promised to fight Gutiérrez in all possible political ways. Nevertheless, the confrontation of the new president was made not with the right forces but with his left allies that have taken him to victory: "He became president with the support of the native movement and left parties, but immediately he wanted to get rid of them; he negotiated and made agreement with the Social Christian Party and later he entered the oligarchic side with Bucaram and Noboa". (Hidalgo F. F., 2005)

In this way, once he became president and already at office, Gutiérrez began to moderate his language: he declared that he would maintain the relation with the IMF, that he would support and would fortify the dollariza-

tion, that he would intensify the entrance of the country to the ALCA, that he would govern for consensus with all sectors of the population, that he would abandon his military suit in order that the people would not look at him as Hugo Chávez, and that he would continue allowing the Americans to use the Manta Base, etc. With all this pronouncements, the contradictions began to alter his linking with all the popular and native allies; many of these had contributed to his electoral victory. The distance with the native movement was made clear when he declared that they were important but that they did not constitute the only social sector in Ecuador.

The CONAIE and especially the native movement Pachakutik had participated actively and were determinants for the exit of the presidents Bucaram and Mahuad; also they were determinants for Gutiérrez winning the presidency in 2002 due to the promises of the candidate of the Patriotic Society January 21 Party. It remained clear that Gutiérrez had used them only with electoral aim because his leftist language changed quickly and also changed his actions during his first year of government, coming even to pursue leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in an agreement with the Colombian President Álvaro Uribe.

In a special way, Nina Pakari and Luis Macas had participated directly as governmental officials (she as foreign Minister and he in the Agriculture Department); the alliance was broken in August 2003, when it was already clear that the government did not take into account the social and economic agenda that the natives had presented. During the first year of government, Pakari was contradicted many times by the president when Gutiérrez felt that there were statements that could disturb the United States; to the Macas Agriculture Department, the president reduced the budget in such a way that barely the director could pay the workers salaries.

When Pakari and Macas renounced the government, Gutierrez was dedicated himself to openly fight the native movement: cooption of leaders, optional use to offer resources to popular organizations, favoring the native groups adversaries of the CONAIE. The president of ECUARUNARI —a group member of the CONAIE— was imprisoned; there was an intent of killing Leonidas Iza, President of the CONAIE. According to Davalos, an advisor of Macas in the Agriculture Department, president Gutiérrez used a military logic to try to destroy politically the native organization, being allied explicitly with the traditional forces that had had the previous governments: "The army, the U.S. Embassy and the Guayaquil oligarchy" (Cfr. Journal *La Jornada*, 26-IV-2005). The campaign had a partial success. One of the main

leaders of the CONAIE, Antonio Vargas, remained with the president until the end and because of this, he was expelled from the organization.

When the "rebellion of the outlaws" occurred on April 13-21, 2005, the few representatives of Pachakutik that remained in the assembly also voted the dismissal of Gutierrez on April 20, 2005. Different to the popular and native revolts that caused the fall of Bucaram and Mahuad, the 2005 social movement that ousted Gutierrez as president of Ecuador was very plural; the fundamental element were the middle classes that shouted "we all are outlaws", doing mention of the words Gutierrez had used naming the demonstrators that had been going to protest in his residence the night on April 13.

"The strength of this *outlaws rebellion* was the open participation of diverse social sectors that rose up against the deterioration of the Ecuadorian political system, chiefly the corruption, and they challenge all the political parties… Brave groups of sports organizations, religious congregations, student associations, youth clubs, professional guilds, neighborhood committees, etc… Professors without Union, military veterans, lawyers in free exercise of the profession, mothers, retirees with lame pay, grannies, private universities students, unemployed people, and also sectors well off sectors" (Hidalgo F.F. 2005). The causes of the movement were found in a generalized refusal to the open governmental corruption[66] of Gutiérrez's government and to the perception about the total submission declared toward the North American president George Bush. "Gutierrez assembled the pillars of his government on an absolute alignment with the Bush administration, betraying the native groups and the left that permitted him his electoral triumph. In his first trip to Washington, in 2003, he proclaimed himself as *the best ally of the United States*; in the meeting with many presidents in Guadalajara, México, in 2004, he named the U.S like *our older brother*. He was educated in the training schools of the U.S. Pentagon and became an unconditional piece of the strategy of the South Command of the United States Army for the Andean region". (Hidalgo F. F., 2005)

When a popular communication alternative radio station, *Radio La Luna,* called to a mobilization on Wednesday April 13, 2005, at nine o'clock at night, instantly, many people went out to the streets and they called themselves *forajidos* (outlaws) and they began to shout: "We are going to see who is the leader: Ecuador or Lucio the son of a bitch"; "let's go Ecuadorians, that this night we are going to kick him out"; "we do not want and we do not have the desire to be an American colony"; "All of them should go, but first

[66] Many analysts indicate that the return of former President Bucaram, forgiven by the national Congress on all the committed crimes, made the Ecuadorians run out of patience.

the dictator"; "The democracy is not for spectators, but for participants", etc. Among the *forajidos* it had appeared also the personality of Rafael Correa, who subsequently would play an important role as minister of finances in the subsequent government of Alfredo Palacio, but with some advanced anti-neoliberal ideas and reacting clearly against the impositions of the international financial agencies.

After another ruler that could not finish his period as government leader, the doctor Alfredo Palacio Gonzalez was named president, who had been a Minister of Health in the government of Sixto Duran and who had accepted to join Lucio Gutierrez for the 2002 elections, postulated by the Sociedad Patriotica (Patriotic Society); Palacio made distance from Gutierrez on December 2005 when the president destituted the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice in order to replace them with his own friends; Palacio said it was a "constitutional break", and afterwards he was sworn as President on April 20, 2005; he was in this position until the official term, on January 15, 2007.

The government of Palacio wanted to take up again declaratively some of the initial program proposals of Lucio Gutierrez, but he did not have time to implement significant changes. His work was dedicated to the preparation of the transition to the following government.

Palacio had as advisor, when he was vice president, the economist Rafael Correa. When Palacio got the executive power, he named Correa as Minister of Economy and Finances. Nevertheless, with his radical criticisms to the economic model, Correa only lasted four months in function as minister; he renounced to the post indicating the pressures of the World Bank and IMF in order that Ecuador would continue accepting the classical prescriptions of the structural adjustment programs. With it, Correa could be presented openly to the electoral process as an independent candidate.

## The Presidential Elections of 2006

For the presidential elections on October 13, 2006, 13 candidates were registered, but none seemed to have a clear advantage in the surveys in order to define the post in the first electoral round. The candidate León Roldós,[67] of Democratic Left, was the leader of the polls on September but barely with a preference between 24 and 26%. According to the private pollster

[67] León was Jaime Roldós' brother, who had been President of Ecuador from 1979 to 1981 and who died in an aviation accident.

*Cedatos*, Cinthya Viteri, representative in the congress and belonging to the right wing of the Christian Social Party was found in second place with a 17% of preferences while the economist Rafael Correa, postulated by *Alianza País*, only achieved a 12%. In fourth place in the polls, was the millionaire businessman Alvaro Noboa, from the Partido Renovador Institucional de Accion Nacional (Institutional Reviving Party of National Action: PRIAN) with only a 9% of vote intention. One must remember that Noboa already had been candidate and lost with Jamil Mahuad in 1997 and with Lucio Gutiérrez in 2002. On that occasion, the native movement *Pachakutik* also presented as presidential candidate one of its leaders, Luis Macas.

In an unexpected way in contrast with the September polls, the result of the elections of October 15, 2006, showed Alvaro Noboa as the leader while Rafael Correa obtained the second place, and Gilmar Gutiérrez, brother of the deposed president during the previous year, arrived to the third place. The so called leftist León Roldós, mentioned many times in the polls, fell to the fourth place. The abstentionism had lifted to 28,5%, in spite of the fact that the vote is obligatory in Ecuador: 6.617.167 ecuadorians went to vote and they left 3.153.376 votes in blank while 775.694 votes were declared void.

Independently of who won the presidency in the second round, the legislative positions in Congress were defined in the first round, offering a majority to the followers of Noboa. The PRIAN was projected like the first force with 27 seats; a block would be formed with the PSP, Noboa's friends, in order to have a strong group of 48 representatives. On the other hand, the Democratic Left would get 13 positions and the old strong party in Congress, the conservative PSC, would fall to the fourth position with only 12 seats. The native organization *Pachakutik* would only win 7 seats while the PRE, directed by the former president Bucaram, achieved only 6 representatives. The projections would give three representatives to the MPD and two to the UDC. The other 9 seats would be distributed in different small groups (LADB. *NotiSur* Nov 10, 2006). In the assembly of the whole 100 representatives, the related positions around Alvaro Noboa were majority. In protest against the flagrant corruption in Congress, Correa had carried out a hazarodous movement: his organization had not proposed candidates to be legislators.

The second electoral round, then, was necessary, because according to the Ecuadorian laws, in order to be a president elected in the first round, the candidate must have reached the 50% of the voting or he would have the 40% and an advantage of 10% points ahead on the following contender. None of these things happened.

**Results of the Presidential Elections:**
**October 15, 2006**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | FIRST ROUND |
|---|---|---|
| Renovador Institucional de Acción Nacional | Álvaro Noboa | 26,83% 1.464.251 votes |
| Alianza País | Rafael Correa Delgado | 22,84% 1.246.333 votes |
| Partido Sociedad Patriótica 21 de Enero | Gilmar Gutiérrez | 17,42% 950.895 votes |
| Izquierda Democrática | León Roldós Aguilera | 14,84% 809.754 |
| Social Cristiano | Cynthia Viteri | 9,63% 525.728 |
| Pachakutik | Luis Macas | 2,19% |
| Roldista Ecuatoriano | Fernando Rosero | 2,08% |
| Movimiento de la Reivindicación Democrática | Marco Proaño Maya | 1,42% |
| Movimiento Popular Democrático | Luis Vallacis | 1,33% |
| Concentración de Fuerzas Populares | Jaime Damerval | 0,46% |
| Movimiento Alianza Tercera República Alba | Marcelo Larrea Cabrera | 0,43% |
| Movimiento Revolucionario de Participación Popular | Lenin Torres | 0,28% |
| Integración Nacional Alfarista | Carlos Sagnay de la Bastida | 0,25% |

**Second Electoral Round**:
**November 26, 2006**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ALIANZA PAÍS | RAFAEL CORREA | 3.517.635 votos |
| PRIAN | ÁLVARO NOBOA | 43,33% 2.689.418 |
| **Total Voters**: **9.165.125** | **Abstentionism**: **25,36%** | |

*Source: Tribunal Supremo Electoral de Ecuador: www.tse.gov.ec*

The two leading candidates had to be faced on November 26, 2006, in an intense campaign where the contrast between both was very clear, outlining two completely different imaginary governments for the country. On one hand, it was the 55 year old Noboa, the richest man of Ecuador with a completely favorable position to the United States; on the other, it was the 43 year old Correa, a critical economist of the neoliberal model imposed by the financial agencies, open critic of the American government of George Bush[68] and admirer of the ideas of Hugo Chávez.

The verbal clash was violent. Noboa accused Correa of being a communist, *chavista* (friend of Hugo Chavez), populist, friend of Cuba, who would bring chaos to Ecuador; Correa accused Noboa of having evaded taxes in his 110 businesses and having used child labor in his banana and coffee plantations. Noboa was presented publicly with his Bible in hand and willing to give money, medicines, computers, etc. and offering jobs, housing, health and services; he obtained besides the explicit support of the PRE. Correa did not have experience in politics but he declared clearly his positions: he wanted to renegotiate the contracts with the oil companies so that Ecuador could have more benefits; he was opposed to a pact of free commerce with the United States; he did not want to renew with the North Americans the use of the Manta military base; he sought support to dissolve the national Congress and to substitute it for a Constituent Assembly; he wanted to confront with nationalist positions the pressures of the WB and the IMF; he referred to the FARC rebels in Colombia not as terrorists but as guerrilla fighters and he refused to support the Colombia Plan of the North

[68] Correa had declared that "Bush is a tremendously clumsy president that has done a lot damage to his country and to the world"; nevertheless, he did very well distinction: "One thing is what I think about Mister Bush and another what I think about the North American people, to which I love a lot because I lived there during four years" (The world.es international. 26-XI-2006), being referred to his PhD studies in economy in the University of Illinois.

American government. Roldos, in the Democratic Left was closer to Alianza Pais positions than to those of the PRIAN and, because of it, he offered his support to Correa in the second round.

The final result of November 26 contrasted with the predictions of the polls but it was quite clear, showing the advantage of Correa on Noboa with 13% of the voting, that signified 828.217 votes more than his opponent. Although Noboa had earned the first electoral round, the people had fear to give the governmental power to the richest man of Ecuador and who represented, besides, the old guard of the politicians; the people, on the contrary, gave its confidence to Correa's promises of change in order to renew the national institutions and to remove all the old guard of traditional politicians. For Noboa it was his third rout in his presidential aspirations: it had occurred against Jamil Mahuad and against Lucio Gutiérrez. The recognition of Correa victory was almost immediate although the Supreme Electoral Court confirmed it until December 4, 2006.

In the Latin American international context, there was no doubt, at the end of 2006, the strengthening of ideological ties with governments as that of Fidel in Cuba, Chávez in Venezuela (reelection), Lula in Brazil (reelection), Evo Morales in Bolivia, Ortega in Nicaragua, and even with Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay, Kirchner in Argentina and Michelle Bachelet in Chile.

Within the country, nevertheless, Correa's challenges were big according to the promises carried out: renegotiate the debt with the international agencies,[69] implement the social programs for the unprotected population, the reform of the Constitution through a National Assembly, not to renew the North American military base in Manta, the integration with the OPEC (Ecuador[70] had left this organization in 1993). All this was very difficult, especially with a parliamentary majority against his posistions, that had been determined in the first electoral round.

The second electoral round of November 26, 2006 included also a referendum with questions about three topics, that had been proposals by the president Alfredo Palacio: on greater investment in health, greater investment in education and a better income distribution from the petroleum ex-

[69] Correa had threatened a moratorium of payments if the international banking did not accept to descend halfway the debt services. On November 26 2006, he affirmed in an interview for the network of television Ecuavisa: "It does not matter to me if the risk of the country rises due to the worry of the speculators about our capacity of the debt payment… The major risk of the country that most worries me are the children suffering".

[70] The country has good oil reserves and produces 535.000 barrels of petroleum a day.

traction. The three questions received a yes response: 67,08% approved the investment in health (6,16% was opposed, 18,99% remained blank and 7,77 were declared void); 66,12% favored the investment in education (7,67% was opposed; 17.99% remained blank and 8,22% were declared void); the 64,23% supported the major use of petroleum resources for social expense (8,24% was opposed, 19,52% remained blank and 8,01% were declared void). (*NotiSur*, Dec 8, 2006)

## Final Considerations

Rafael Correa and his partner Lenin Moreno took possession as president and vice president, on January 15, 2007. Alianza Pais, the organization that postulated him, had the support during the second electoral round from the Izquierda Democratica, the Partido Socialista Frente Amplio, from the movement Alternativa Democratica, from the movement Nuevo Pais, from the Movimiento Poder Ciudadano and from the native movement *Pachakutik*. His topics of the electoral campaign were taken up again in his speech when he took office presenting five action axes for his government: the constitutional revolution, the fight against corruption, the economic revolution, the education and health revolution, and the rescue of the dignity, sovereignty and the search of the Latin-American integration.

The historic characters named in this speech were the following: Simón Bolivar (the most mentioned) and Manuela Saenz, General Rafael San Martín, Professor Simón Rodríguez, Poet Pablo Neruda, General Eloy Alfaro for driving liberalism out of the country, Juan Montalvo who is the critical thinker of authoritarianism, the Cuban poet Jose Martí, the Pope John Paul II, the black poet Antonio Preciado, the precursor of the independence Francisco J. Eugenio Espejo and the American fighter for the Civil Rights in the U.S. Martin Luther King.

As leader of the government, he ordered 50% salary reductions to all the senior sate officials, and his main proposal was framed in the axis of the constitutional revolution: the decision of preparing the formation of a Constituent Assembly. He did not have the majority of the support from congress because this proposal signified an anticipated dissolution of the legislative power, but he achieved that legislators —with multiple pressures and popular demonstrations— approved a referendum that was carried out on April 15, 2007: the result was a majority support of the 81,7% of the voters (against a 12,5% that opted for the NO). The approval of a special

assembly of 130 citizens was achieved then and his task would be taking charge of editing the proposal for a new constitution. It was a troubled and complex process, but the people that had elected Correa on November 2006 they also expressed to him their approval to reform the constitution. The members of the constituent assembly would have six months to edit their proposal, which would have, again, to be submitted to another referendum relating to its content. At the same time, Correa announced that Ecuador already had settled its counts with the IMF and, with it, already the country would have nothing to do or wanted to listen more on that international bureaucracy; from then on "economically, we are going to leave behind that disastrous neoliberal model". (LADB, *NotiSur*, April 20, 2007)

More than one year later and in the middle of controversies between the legislature and the executive, the referendum on the content of the new proposed constitution was carried out on September 28, 2008. And again the triumph of the YES was clear upon obtaining the next day the 63,97% of the votes while the NO only achieved the 28.11%. In Ecuador, then, there continues to be the great hope of change with Correa's project tending toward a post-neoliberalism. The enemies of the project were visibly identified: the traditional Ecuadorian oligarchy especially that of Guayaquil, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the old political party system and the American threads inside the country.

According to the social communicator Luis Ángel Saavedra, some essential proposals of the new constitution are the following: "The new constitution begins with the recognition that the nation has an ancient social diversity and that it is necessary to incorporate a cosmic vision inside the structure of the State. Because of it, the constitution recognizes, for example, that nature has inalienable rights and defines nature not only as a source of resources but like the *Pachamama* (mother earth) *where the life reproduces itself and unfolds*. The nature, then, has the right *to exist, to persist, to maintain and to regenerate its life cycles, functions and evolutionary processes*. On this base of nature rights, the Constitution calls to build a model of social development and solidarity where the human beings, in harmony with nature, are constituted like object of the public politics, leaving aside the supposed prominence of the market as axis of the economy. This new vision prioritizes the social investment and therefore the new Constitution establishes the State obligation to satisfy the demand of certain rights as the universal social security of the workers and of the people that is unemployed and free education up to the university level. The human right to the water is recognized, and its access should be

guaranteed and, because of it, the privatization is prevented or the embargo of this resource. Also the Ecuadorian multinationality is recognized. The Constitution declares that Ecuador is a territory of peace, free of foreign military bases, rejecting the imposition of military bases that some countries may have in other territories. The document also establishes a system of protection of the migrant, protecting the right of the Ecuadorians that have emigrated and the rights of those who have migrated into Ecuador, for which equal rights are established". (LADB. *NotiSur*, Oct. 10, 2008)

Continuing all the rules of the representative democracy, Rafael Correa's project in Ecuador —not without big difficulties— has been advancing solidly. A majority endorsement has been given to his transformation project of the economy and of the Ecuadorian society, declaring a refusal to the neoliberal project that has been imposed in the last decades. The refusal to this model was clearly manifested in his campaign and in the speech when he took possession of the presidential office on January 2007: "The economic politics followed by Ecuador since the end of the 80's were framed faithfully in the paradigm of the dominant development in Latin America, called *neoliberalism*, with its own corruption weaknesses, the need of maintaining the economic subordination and the demand to serve the external debt. All this recipe book of politics obeyed to the so called *Washington Consensus*, a supposed consensus in which, for shame of Latin America, we the Latin Americans did not participate… the harmful neoliberal cycle finally has been surpassed by the people of our America" (Correa R., 15-I-2007); the simplification of the free commerce is a useless prescription, which not even the countries that promote this doctrine apply for themselves. But the current challenge is to create an alternative, the new model of development that is barely being enunciated, but in which Ecuador is proposing new roads: "Ecuador and Latin America should seek not only a new strategy, but also a new conception of development, that does not reflect only on perceptions, experiences and interests of groups and dominant countries; that could not submit societies, lives and people to the entelechy of the market; where the State, the planning and the collective action recover their essential role for progress; some intangible but fundamental assets as the social capital could be preserved; and where the apparent demands of the economy, could not be exclusivist and, even worse, antagonistic of the social development" (Correa R. 15-I-2007). In Ecuador there are not only desires and utopias but also governmental efforts with democratic support that can be translated in the alternative development for which many Latin Americans fight.

In April 2007, the referéndum for a Constituent Assambly took place and 81,72% of the Ecuadorians voted in favor. Then, in 2008, a new Constitution was approved by referéndum. The president himself named the road for Ecuador: "Socialism will continue. The Ecuadorean people voted for that". (Correa, R. April 30, 2009)

## 6.5. NICARAGUA: The Return of the Sandinista Movement

On February 25, 1990, in an unexpected way for many national and international observers, the Front Sandinist for the National Liberation (FSLN) was defeated in the presidential electoral process; the contender Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, postulated by the Union Nacional Opositora (Opposing National Union: UNO), conquered the triumph with the 54,74% of the voting (777.552 votes) set against the 40,82% achieved by the FSLN. It was a great triumph because the opponents also achieved the 73% of the city halls of the country and, inside the 90 seats in the National Assembly, the UNO achieved 51 against 39 of the FSLN.

A revolution that in 1979 had ousted the Somoza family dictatorship, the longest one in Latin America, it remained in the government of the country during 11 years: at first, the nation was governed by a collective junta, then Daniel Ortega was chosen as president in 1984 for a period of 6 years. The Sandinista government obeyed the electoral laws and left in 1990 the direction of the government to the opponents.

A lot has been analyzed about the reasons why the Front lost the government in 1990 having been one of the most popular movements. It has been a long fight of the people against the dictatorship and also the national Sandinist government implemented many social actions recognized internally and internationally as, for example, the successful education campaign under the direction of Fernando Cardenal. Among the diverse reasons, one of the most important certainly was the war caused by th American intervention; the warlike administration of the republican president Ronald Reagan focused its foreign policy in the Central American area, visualizing especially the countries of Nicaragua and El Salvador as the main recipients of its military, political, and economic support: in the first case, favoring all the activities that could be against the Nicaraguan Government; in the second case, offering all the resources to the Salvadoran Government to fight against the insurgency of the Front Farabundo Martí for the National Liberation (FMLN).

For Nicaragua it was a painful civil war: inside the country, some groups against the Sandinista revolution arose, the so called "contras" inside the country or "freedom fighters" by the northamerican government. In 1984, Daniel Ortega could obtain the presidency of the country through an electoral process with extensive support of the people but then the opposition refused to participate. Nevertheless, the discussion about war was very present during the electoral campaign of 1989-90 because, if the FSLN was to continue in the government, a continuation of the military confrontation with the USA was easily predicted. The Nicaraguan people opted electorally for an opposition that had been agglutinated against the sandinism: 14 political parties found in Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro a symbol for their fight. And the UNO conquered the Nicaragua presidency although in an immediate way with the new government the coalition faded in his internal contradictions: Violeta Barrios governed without a specific project being allied with whom she was able in each moment, less with the Sandinistas. But the fundamental thing in the country was achieved: to dismantle the armed confrontation through a complex and difficult process that produced new groups arisen from the demilitarization of the country: many promises and multiple supports have been made to them hoping them to return to political life (many promises were very little complied).

16 years after the electoral rout in 1990, and in another intent[71] of Daniel Ortega as presidential candidate, the FSLN returned in 2006 to the government. But it has been a complex process that we will try to analyze in this chapter.

## Second Electoral Route of the Sandinistas in 1996

In the economic model, the period of Violeta Chamorro was characterized for a return to the shelters offered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), although in practice the American government stopped to be interested in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas out of power, and it did not offer resources for Nicaragua's development as it was toward the counterrevolution. In the political level, the opposition was unified against the Sandinista movement but, at the moment of governing the country, no longer was there unity but a plurality of groups inside the gov-

[71] It was the fifth intent of Daniel Ortega to get the presidency of Nicaragua: he had the electoral victory in 1984, and he was a defeated as presidential candidate in 1990, 1996, 2001.

ernment. "The change of state initiated in 1990 with the victory of Violeta Barrios was not produced in the context of a social consensus to organize the society after the revolutionary experiment. The normative framework of the neoliberal economic reform prompted by the government of Violeta Barrios practically was imposed by the international financial agencies that supported the transition" (Pérez-Baltodano A., 2006). A period of privatization of the economy came along with decline of the previous social programs, and Nicaragua, in spite of stabilizing the macroeconomic level and the inflation, in 1996 it was found among the poorest countries of Latin America (with an annual income average of 435 USA dollars per inhabitant) and with high levels of delinquency due to all the demobilized people who could not find work places of insertion in the institutional economic activity of the country; the periphery of misery was enlarged around the capital Managua and a massive movement of illegal migration toward the neighboring country of the east, Costa Rica, began, considered as a strong pole of attraction in its economy and way of life.

The new electoral presidential process of 1996 was carried out with a new realignment of political groups where the FSLN had become the main opposition party to the government, in spite of its own desertions and divisions[72] that suffered in that decade. 23 presidential candidates were presented in 2006: 18 were with the endorsement of a single party and the other 5 with support of alliances among diverse organizations. Nevertheless, the combat was defined around two fundamental positions: that of Daniel Ortega that contended again under the FSLN flag, and that of Arnoldo Alemán with a radical right ideology connected with old characters of the time of Somoza, through a coalition that was presented as Alianza Liberal (Liberal Alliance). Being the main contenders, the electoral polls placed them almost at the same level in the preferences of the people. It was probably the intervention of the leaders of the Catholic Church in favor of Aleman influencing fear in the population if the FSLN would return to power, remembering the situation of the war in the 80's what determined this second defeat for the Sandinistas.

Even though, the Front transformed itself abandoning radical positions trying to be presented as a social democratic alternative. It went leaving positions of open confrontation with the United States; it presented the respect to private property and the leaders were accompanied by members of large

[72] One of them was that of Sergio Ramírez Mercado, who had been vice president in the Daniel Orega government but was separated of the Front and wanted to form his own group, the Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS: Reviving Sandinist Movement).

producers of cattle; he wanted to attract even the old "contras" offering them positions in the future government; it insisted specially in the reactivation of the social programs focused toward the most impoverished sectors of the country. The FSLN was almost in line with Arnoldo Alemán in the last days of the electoral process, but Mons. Obando y Bravo warned the population about the wolves presented with a sheep skin.

The Liberal Alliance never hid its links with the large businessmen of the country advancing the interests of the private initiative as the important part of its future government program; it managed to include important sectors of the middle class related to the commerce and many owners whose goods had been confiscated by the Agrarian Reform of the Sandinistas; it wanted to easly attract the exiled Nicaraguan people in the United States back into Nicaragua; it promised a greater transformation of the national army to remove and clean every trace of the Sandinista ideology. The alliance with the Catholic Church was strategic because Obando y Bravo itself urged to vote for the Liberal Alliance.

Days before the elections on October 20, 1996, both forces carried out their closing of campaigns with large mobilizations of the people. The Liberal alliance was able to join nearly 80,000 people in the Plaza of the Republic while the Sandinista movement filled the Plaza John Paul II with 150,000 people.

Until November 8th, 1996, the Electoral Supreme Counsel offered publicly the complete results: the Liberal Alliance had obtained 904.908 votes (51,03%) while the FSLN had only achieved 669.443 votes (the 37,65%. In the Congress, the Liberal Alliance remained with 42 seats while the Front with 36 legislators. The other 15 legislative seats (there are 93 legislators on the whole) were distributed among the 11 minority parties that could remain with legal recognition. According to the electoral Nicaraguan law, besides, if the leading candidate obtained more than the 45% of the voting, and a second electoral round was not needed, because of it, Aleman was declared immediately the president of the Republic, in spite of the fraud accusations denounced by the FSLN, and testified by other sources: "The process of votings on October 20 was seen as by a number of anomalies or fraudulent actions located in various municipalities" (Envio. Nov-Dic 1996). At any rate, the triumph of Alemán little by little was being recognized by national and international observers. The fear campaign sown by the Catholic Church and numerous business leaders could function again to impede the return of the Sandinism to the Presidency and then Arnoldo Alemán took possession as president on January 10th, 1997.

## The Alemán Government and the 2001 elections

"In the 1996 elections, the anti-sandinista alliance headed by Arnoldo Aleman and the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) obtained a clear victory on the Front Sandinista of National Liberation (FSLN) and its candidate, Daniel Ortega. It included the open USA and Nicaraguan Catholic Church support. Between 1997 and 2002, Aleman maintained the economic model adopted by the government of Violeta Barrios and initiated one of the most corrupt periods in the history of Nicaragua". (Pérez-Baltodano A., 2006)

The confrontation of forces became wide open during the first 100 days of government of the Liberal Alliance, especially on the issue of the Alemán economic politics. In the specific case about the confiscated lands to big owners by the government of the FSLN during the 80s, Violeta Chamorro's government had promoted big compensations, proposing a reconciliation processes; nevertheless, the Alemán government simply wanted the return of the confiscated lands to their old owners, a fact that endangered numerous property titles of peasants. The FSLN declared itself at war on the streets all over the country and it was a great opposistion force, to such extent that in the month of April a period of negotiation was opened: sharing power was the proposal of Daniel Ortega; the main political forces of the country should jointly decide about the most important topics of the national politics.

The real politics was imposed and Alemán asked the legislative power to suspend the attempt to make illegal the property titles distributed during the Sandinista government and then along with Ortega they signed publicly a pact where many joint committees were created between Sandinistas and the government in order to analyze the confiscated properties, the transportation, production problems and social programs. With it, the mobilizations finished and some kind of joint government was installed, that was seen with criticism by sectors of both groups. Many criticized Alemán by agreeing with the pact thinking that the government was subordinated to the demands of the Front; many others criticized Ortega by collaborating with a government catalogued as oligarchic. Nevertheless, the April 18th, 1997 Pact was the start of a new epoch where the continuous political negotiation was preferred than the violent confrontation of political forces. "The FSLN began to collaborate with the PLC. Utilizing its overwhelming majority in the national Assembly, the liberals and the Sandinistas distributed the power in the Supreme Court of Justice, the Electoral Supreme Counsel, the High

Counsel for the Finance Office, the Attorney's Office of Human Rights and the Supervision of Banks. The pact, besides, made possible the approval of a law that legalized the *piñata* (Spanish word meaning the way how many sandinists took ressources from the State before leaving office in 1990) and left open the doors for the introduction of a constitutional reform that would perpetuate the power of the two big parties". (Pérez-Baltodano A., 2006)

The space for negotiation was never easy, given the context of confrontation between both forces and specially given the big difference in many matters as the confiscated lands by the sandinist government during the 80s and other topics like the financing of the public education. The topic about the confiscated lands returned in fact to the position that Violeta Chamorro had had: the study case by case to examine where abuses had occurred but in general offering compensation[73] in most cases in which the land had been distributed to small owners. But always there were non conformists and, in this case, there were the old owners, the "Confederacy of Confiscated", who had imagined the nullification of all the confiscated lands[74] since the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in 1979. Since 1999, members of the Somoza family and large owners during the time of the dictatorship had formed the Democratic Nicaraguan Front, declaring explicit interests of participating again in the political life. As several Nicarguan Somocistas they were living in the United States and had become American citizens, their demands acquired international relief because they had the support from the American government. Vice President Enrique Bolaños himself was set apart from the Alemán proposals refusing to offer anything that signified concession to the Sandinistas.

On another level, one must indicate that the Alemán government was always accused of corruption and not only when he assumed the presidency but also before when he had been the Mayor of Managua. Particularly, after the scourge of the hurricane Mitch in 1998 on great part of Nicaragua and Honduras, the president was accused to embezzle the funds of aid coming from international agencies. Because of this, the battle of the General Comptroller took place in 1999, Agustín Jarquín, so that the president could

[73] In fact, a Compensations Quantification Office was created for the purpose of measuring in each case the right of the old owners to be paid by the value of the confiscated lands.

[74] Even there were some relatives of Somoza Debayle asking that 340 properties should be returned to them: one of the most important was a land where the new Cathedral of Managua had been built. Violeta Barrios as president had donated this land unconditionally to the catholic church.

declare the origin of all his goods; he considered that the Aleman personal patrimony had grown in 900% since his period as Managua mayor up to then in which he was being President. Aleman considered that, according to the law, he should only declare his goods until the moment when he leaves this position. In this dispute, it is interesting to note that the Jarquín demand did not have the FSLN support; though the FSLN did not attack Jarquín directly, it never set by his side, especially afterwards when Jarquin instead of accuser of fraud he became accused on November 1999; besides, the Front supported a law in order to remove faculties to the figure of independent comptroller. A judge ordered the arrest of Jarquin on November 10: they removed him from his office and put him in jail.

The arrest of Jarquín put again to public light the criticisms to the pact of joint government between the Alemán Constitutional Liberal Party and the Daniel Ortega FSLN. The commissions continued meeting to discuss for example the proposal of reform to the Finance Office with a greater number of members, or the increase of greater number of seats in the Supreme Court of Justice and the Electoral Supreme Counsel, but public attention was centered in the ambivalence of the FSLN on the case of the imprisoned Jarquin and on the illicit enrichment of Alemán. In spite of it, the pact carried to the assembly of representatives a constitutional reform proposal series in the month of December. They were approved with 74 votes in favor and 17 against with two abstentions. Among those who voted against, there were 4 Sandinistas.

The reforms approved were the following: a permanent seat in the legislative assembly for the departing presidents and vice presidents; the percentage of voting was reduced from 45 to 40% in order to be declared president in the first round of the presidential election for the candidate that carried the advantage; the creation of the Higher Counsel of the Finance Office with 5 members (2 positions for the liberals, 2 for the FSLN and one by an agreement of the two groups) in replacement of the independent comptroller; to establish the request that the governmental officials and judges could leave their posts a year before the competition for the Congress; an increment of the number of judges in the Supreme Court of Justice (from 10 to 12) and in the Electoral Supreme Counsel (from 5 to 7). This was one more way to materialize the joint government that had been established between liberals and sandinists.

In the public opinion, nevertheless, the situation did not go well for the government to such extent that there were pressures of international agen-

cies as the European Union itself that criticized the lack of governability in the country. Even the IMF and World Bank threatened not to include Nicaragua in the debt cancellation program for the poor countries. In fact, some industrialized countries suspended large quantities of economic aid to Nicaragua[75] due to the lack of governability of the country and to the corruption accusations against President Alemán.

On December 24, 1999, a court in Managua rejected the fraud charges against Jarquín and put him in liberty; with it, Jarquín returned to his job just before it went into effect the restructuration of the general finance office ordered by the legislators; before leaving the post, he renewed the accusations against president Alemán through a detailed report, putting forward illegal acts, embezzlement and nepotism actions enriching his relatives, saying also that Alemán had intended to remove him from the job. The Commission of Human Rights of Central America (CODEHUCA) mentioned in its report on December 1999 that Nicaragua was the worst of the countries of the region treating human rights "with high levels of ungovernability, democratic deficiencies, impunity and a poor administration of justice". (LADB, January 13, 2000)

But neither the situation turned out to be positive for the FSLN because internal divisions appeared referring especially to the strong criticisms to the pact of joint government with Alemán. On December 1999, for example, the Sandinista leader Carlos Guadamuz, director of the radio station *Radio Ya*, criticized openly Daniel Ortega by his pact with the government calling him traitor to the FSLN principles. The Ortega retaliations were immediate: Guadamuz was suspended on December 17, and *Radio Ya* was closed. Nevertheless, other sandinist groups were created[76] with the aim declared of reverting what they called the right-wing tendency of the Front and the cooperation with the government.

Also, when the Forum of Sao Paulo was carried out in Managua on February 2000, it worked as a double purpose when the dissident Sandinistas expressed their criticism toward the FSLN official positions; they accused the Front of being subordinated to the neoliberal model cooperating with

[75] On July 20, 2000, for example, the European Union suspended a promised aid of 4,65 million dollars.

[76] Another former Sandinista leader, Joaquín Cuadra would also, in June of the 2000, intent to form a third force, the Movement of national Unity, that would not be part of the pact between the right and the left but of centrist tendency, with the purpose to face the cogoverment of the PLC and FSLN.

the new *Somocism*. But both Ortega and Tomas Borge continued defending openly the new features of the Front indicating that it was the correct way to go back to the government power.

On March 2000, the National Assembly approved the new Law of the System of Savings for Retirement where the funds were privatized; those funds were handled before by the State through the Instituto Nicaraguense de Seguridad Social, transfering them to the Private Administrations of the pension Funds. The new workers would have to put their contributions in individual accounts for the retreat. The fundamental reason of the governmental proposal was the lack of real contributions to guarantee the retirement funds in the following years under the state plan; the private administration would be more effective and would guarantee the individual accounts through the personal contributions and from other sectors.

The unions and other social sectors were opposed to their law proposal. The FSLN itself opposed formally, but it always remained doubt about the form in which the proposal was approved like a maneuver orchestrated by the same pact of joint government: on March 15, 2000, the proposal was approved by the assembly with 45 votes in favor, 7 in against and with one abstention; there were 28 representatives that had left the room in protest; from them, 24 were sandinists. Formally, the FSLN had called to vote for the "no", but the majority of the delegation left the assembly as sign of protest and there only remained three sandinist representatives to vote really for the "no". In fact, the Front representatives who remained made possible to maintain the official quorum of the assembly, where the approval of the privatizing law was done official.

President Alemán continued in serious political problems because some legislators presented the demand to remove his immunity in order to proceed to his later dismissal. There was also a real problem with the money that has not arrived to the country because many governments did not want the resources to flow to a situation of instability and with a president full of corruption accusations; some private sectors and legislative groups found the fundamental reason in order to seek his dismissal: he was mentally unskilled to govern. The proposal was presented to the Assembly putting forward 20 reasons to prove the mental incapacity of Arnoldo Alemán; some of these criteria were his degree of personal arrogance, his lack of respect of the law, the contempt of the opposition, his alcohol abuse and his overweight (he weighed 376 lbs. at 5'5). But, again, this intent failed to pass in the assembly due to the pact between liberals and Sandinistas.

In spite of all the criticism over the joint government between Alemán and the Sandinistas, the FSLN achieved a great triumph in the municipal elections on 2000, especially winning the Managua City Hall with its candidate Herty Lewites. With this, Daniel Ortega declared his intention to compete for third occasion for the presidential post in 2001, foretelling that the Front would return to government power. Seeing the quantity of municipalities, the PLC succeeded in most of them (97 from the total 151), but the Front won 49 including Managua and the main cities of the country. On January 2001, the two main parties nominated their candidates for the following presidential elections on November 2001: the PLC named Enrique Bolaños, and the FSLN Daniel Ortega, although with embezzlement accusations in his own groups.

Throughout 2001 until November, it was the electoral campaign, coming again the attacks between the two main contending forces. The pact between the PLC and FSLN had finished in real life because it was a matter of deciding again the position of the national ruler. The verbal attacks multiplied: Aleman attacked the Sandinistas speaking about the constant enrichment and even accusing them of wanting to kill him; the Front attacked Alemán of corruption, illicit enrichment and inefficiency in solving the problems of the country. The Nicarguan president gave another motive for a big dispute when he tried to build a heliport in *Los Chiles*, one of his properties south of Managua, and another heliport in the property of his sister Amelia Alemán. He was accused because both the helicopter with such luxury and the heliports were built with public funds; this matter came again to the General Finance Office. Jarquín was no longer there this time, but Sandinista Luis Ángel Montenegro was one of the members and accepted the accusation; Alemán had to admit that the heliport construction was with public funds but that it was recommended to him by security reasons and indicated that the helicopter was not his property but rented for official matters.

President Alemán added accusations against him in many other fields. For example, the Miami businessman Ricardo Mas Canosa accused him formally on September 2001 in a Nicaraguan court of having appropriated of 2,5 million dollars that he had donated for his 1996 electoral campaign; Aleman never used the money for the campaign but made a deposit for himself in his account in a foreign bank. But Mas Canosa only got an arrest warrant against him.

On the other hand, the FSLN had the opportunity to meet again with the MRS[77] through an electoral alliance; this was given due to the fact that Ramirez did not have legal recognition in his own organization. Sergio Ramírez had abandoned the Front and he had been launched as presidential candidate in 1996 but without obtaining a significant voting; in 2001, in spite of the criticisms that remained accusing the Front of having abandoned the left and to have added itself as a partner in the Aleman government, trying to defeat the liberals, they walked again together in the electoral arena. The Sandinista pronouncements, in fact, continued changing, emphasizing ideology positions of center in the economic politics; the Front declared even its desire of including the old contras or even members of the old Somoza National Guard. The organization *Convergencia Nacional* postulated Ortega and had the opportunity to agglutinate other small parties that had not obtained the registration. Ortega came to be on top of the electoral preferences before the date of the election.

The Enrique Bolaños campaign was based again on fear, accusing the FSLN linked with the international terrorism and wanting to take advantage of the attacks to the New York towers. The USA government sent emissaries to collaborate with the PLC and to impede Ortega's return to the government: the ambassador Oliver Garza and officials of the North American State Department emitted public statements on the terrible consequences that would come on Nicaragua in the case of the triumph of the FSLN, to which they denounced with its links with governments favoring the international terrorism; the governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, a week before the election, inserted explicit publicity in two Nicaraguan newspapers to support Bolaños and to attack explicitly Ortega as "an enemy of everything that the United States represents and as a friend of our enemy"; he added: "It is inconceivable that the people can choose a return to the totalitarian past". (LADB, *NotiCen*, nov. 8, 2001)

Although the FSLN candidate maintained a light advantage on Bolaños in the prior weeks to the electoral date on November 4, 2001, the victory of the PLC was shown with clarity, especially when we watch the vote of the undecided; there was only a 8% of abstentionism. The results were the

[77] In spite of the formal alliance with the MRS, some characters linked previously to the Sandinista movement expressed that they would abstain to vote; among these statements was Sergio Ramírez, the novelist Gioconda Belli and the priest Ernesto Cardenal. They considered, on one hand, that Bolaños continued representing the somocist interests and, by another, that the FSLN no longer was a representative of the revolution.

following: "Counting the 94% of the voting emitted, the Electoral Supreme Counsel (CSE) announced November 7 that Bolaños had obtained the 56,04% of the votes… Ortega obtained 42.59%, and the candidate of the Conservative Party (PC) Alberto Saborio only the 1.37%. Bolaños and his chosen vice president Jose Rizo will take possession on January 10, 2002". (LADB, Nov. 8, 2001)

## The Bolaños Government (2002-2006)

Bolaños' victory was clear and because Ortega and his candidate to vice president Agustín Jarquín recognized it in an immediate way, although they reproached the interference of the United States, who had taken advantage of the attacks on September 11th on its own land to instill more fear in the people with the issue of terrorism. Bolaños had been Alemán's Vice President and held a great grudge on the Sandinistas: upon being chosen he was 73 years old but he had in mind how the FSLN government in the 80's had confiscated his lands (even he was imprisoned some time); he had been businessman and he came to be president of the powerful organization of the *Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada* (COSEP). But also the new government wanted to be far away from the previous president. "The PLC obtained a new victory, with a 56,3% of the votes, while the FSLN reached a 42,3%. To avoid becoming a puppet controlled by Alemán, Bolaños took advantage of the popular discontent created by the corruption and undertook a campaign against the main officials of the departing government involved in scandals". (Pérez-Baltodano A., 2006)

Nevertheless, the same similar forces of the previous government were going to remain: the FSLN had lost again the presidency, but continued being the main opposition force[78] with which the government should negotiate but without arriving at the level of joint government as it has happened in the previous period. Bolaños recognized this situation immediately but besides he wanted to be away from the image of the previous government upon indicating his priority of attacking corruption, in which Arnoldo Alemán

[78] From the 90 legislative seats in the National Assembly (and two seats more were offered to the Aleman former president and to Daniel Ortega), the PLC had obtained a 49 majority, but the sandinists conquered 41 positions. Later there would be a sour dispute because the Electoral Supreme Counsel (CSE), in a new count of votes, judged 53 seats to the PLC, 38 to the FSLN and 1 to the PC, a party that had not reached the minimum of voting required by law. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court of Justice vouched for the decision of the CSE.

had been seen wrapped continuously; this matter, in fact, was put to work on April 2002 when the 5 governmental auditors in common agreement began to audit the period in which Alemán had been the Managua Mayor and the presidential period 1996-2002, in spite of the fact that he enjoyed immunity by the legislative seat that had been offered to him without election. The former president had done a statement of goods upon leaving his position by a value of 1,3 million dollars, but he had not included his investments in the Telecommunications and 10 properties that could be worth 60,000 dollars each one. Numerous Alemán former-collaborators[79] were accused and put in prison by the justice while it was required that the former-president immunity was removed.

The Bolaños government named Alberto Novoa as the fiscal pursuer of the corruption, who achieved strong successes upon achieving capture orders and jail for various officials of the previous government, but his work was fleeting because he was fired on June 2002 having made some comments on the irregular operations of organizations relating to the Catholic Church; in his place, the old judge Jose Eduardo Boza was appointed. A lot of speculation took place then, asking if the fight against corruption initiated by Bolaños had its well precise limits.

In anyway, the effort of Bolaños was focused against Alemán and his old collaborators. And the proofs were evident about lack on the million dollars that had been stolen[80] but they collided against the immunity of the former president. The request for taking out his immunity divided the party in the government: there were in the PLC the supporters of Bolaños posistion and the Alemán defenders, to such extent that on June 2002 they carried out different conventions inside the same party. On the other hand, inside the FSLN a sympathy was shown for supporting Bolaños to such extent that there were offered to the president the Sandinista votes in case they were needed to get the required 60% in the Assembly for the decission. A new special public prosecutor against corruption accused Alemán on Au-

[79] Byron Jeréz, former Director of the General Direction of Income (DGI) and various directors of the televisión Channel 6 were arrested. 6 former functionaries were imprisoned. Other former colaborators as the minister of Health Mariangeles Arguello and Jorge Solís Farías, former Business President of Telecommunications (ENITEL), the Treasure Minister Esteban Duque Estrada, the Superintendent of Retirement Martín Aguado, etc. they managed to flee the country.

[80] Manuel Ignacio Lacayo, one of the richest businessmen of the country, reckoned publicly that Aleman had stolen 60 million dollars during the time he governed as president.

gust 2002 of damages against the State by having stolen million of dollars and he asked at for at least a 30 year sentence; he sent all the documentation to the National Assembly and also to the PARLACEN where he had also a legislative seat.[81] The alliance between the liberals of Bolaños and the FSLN representatives managed to change on September 2002 the board of directors of the Assembly. Finally on December 12, the immunity of the former president was taken out; they removed from him the parliamentary immunity with 47 votes in favor and zero against (38 Sandinista votes and 9 of the Bolaños PLC); there was a sufficient quorum, although 35 legislators who favored Aleman had abandoned the session in protest. On December 22, he was found guilty of numerous charges and sentenced to 20 years in jail. It can be argued with this a triumph of the Nicaraguan justice with a new president supported by the Sandinistas, but Alemán did not even stepped in jail; only he suffered house arrest in his farm of *Los Chiles*, 26 kilometers south of Managua, something approved by President Bolaños and Daniel Ortega; he had been found guilty of fraud, conspiracy against the state, badly use of the public resources, electoral crimes. It was indicated that he had stolen from the government 97,2 million dollars and he had hidden them in personal accounts and with relatives in Panama and other places.

Later, in 2004, President Bolaños himself would be accused by the same General finance Office of the Republic by not giving sufficient information on certain funds that he used in the electoral campaign to the presidency in 2001, and in fact a legal procedure was initiated to remove him from the position of president inside the National Assembly. The auditors had found that Bolaños had received 7 million dollars of illegal contributions that he used for his own campaign (LADB, *NotiCen* Nov 11, 2004). Nevertheless, the president could continue at the head of the government, but the National Assembly, with 74 of the 91 total votes, could approve amendments to the constitution[82] triying to limit severely the presidential power, although by common consent they were frozen until 2007. Any way, Bolaños popularity went in descent, specially when on May 30, 2005, he decreed a state of

[81] This membership in the Parlacen is offered to all the former presidents of Central America. But, a week later, the double immunity argued by the former president was denied to him by a Nicaraguan judge.

[82] The amendments to the Nicaraguan constitution were radicals to such extent that it was proposed a semi-parliamentary model: the president would not be able to name the judges, he would not have to be able to control the public utilities, he would not be able to appoint neither dismiss ministers or ambassadors, … All these proposals were postponed.

national emergency suspending guarantees to the citizens, upon imposing a rise of 11,83% in the payment of electricity of those who consume more than 150 KW of electricity.

The FSLN had gone transforming itself[83] into the development of the practical real politics being an opposition party: during the two electoral campaigns to the presidency (1996 and 2001), the speeches had gone traveling toward the center level, diminishing the confrontation with the United States, presenting respect to the private property, seeking approach with groups of the old counterrevolutionary people and the members of the Somoza national guard, having negotiated with the Aleman government establishing a Pact of governability, etc. but they did not abandon the language of the left, the commitment with the poor, the impulse on social programs and even speaking about the model for a socialist society. The commemorative feast of the 23rd anniversary of the sandinist revolution, on July 19, 2002, as much Ortega as the vice president Tomas Borge reaffirmed their belief in the principles of the socialism, their claim to the North American governments for all the war damages in the decade of the 80s and the meager economic aid after the subsequent governments, their position of resistance against the neoliberal model with the pressures of the IMF and the WB to impose it to Nicaragua. Nevertheless, Daniel Ortega's leadership was criticized by some people inside and out of the Party. Sergio Ramirez, of the MRS, called him *dictator*; his stepdaughter, Zoilamerica Narvaez had accused him publicly to have obliged her in the 80s in order to have sexual relations; Víctor Hugo Tinoco, member of the National Political Counsel of the Front, expressed doubts about the internal democracy of the organization and denounced the political patronage system. Subsequently, during the dispute for the ratification of the CAFTA in Nicaragua during 2005, although the FSLN voted against and a legislative majority of 49 votes approved it, Ortega mentioned his intention of not blocking the treaty and to continue with the dialogue with officials of the American embassy.

Any way, the FSLN had its coincidences and its dissents with the government through the disputes in the National Assembly. In 2003, for example, the Sandinistas coincided with the president Bolaños to pass a fiscal reform that,

[83] Many people asked, for example, why an individual as Ricardo Mas Canosa, brother of the leader of the movement anti-Fidel Castro in Miami, could support Daniel Ortega in 2001 during the presidential campaign; he also said that he would continue supporting him in his presidential aspirations in 2006, upon attending the 24th anniversary of the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution on July 19th, 2003.

in their understanding, would collect more resources to dedicate them to social programs; but the president found opposition from those legislators that were identified completely with the businessmen and who had opposed to a bigger tax collection. On the other hand, in 2003, the president Bolaños put the proposal to send 230 nicaraguan soldiers to support the North American troops in the war agaisnt Iraq; certainly, the FSLN was opposed to it, but the proposal could pass with 50 votes in favor and 37 who voted against. Nevertheless, for 2004, in the context of the José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero triumph in Spain and with the announcement that he would withdraw the Spanish troops from Iraq, other countries also, as Honduras, continued this example; in the case of Nicaragua, the return of the Nicaraguan personnel was decided but only referring as reason the lack of economic resources to maintain them.

In 2004, something new began to occur in the frame of political forces. At the moment of the previous presidential elections before 2006, the contradiction was expressed clearly in two main forces contenders: the FSLN and the PLC. Nevertheless, upon being distanced Enrique Bolaños' government from the former president Aleman accused of corruption and with him in prison, the right began to be divided. The *de facto* bipartisanship began to be cracked when Bolaños favored the creation of a new party, the *Alianza por la Republica* (APRE), formed by the coalition of diverse parties and groups (the Great Liberal Union, the Conservative Party of Nicaragua, the Democratic Nicaraguan Movement, the Nicaraguan Christian Social Party, and the Movement of National Unity) with the intention to make a lasting organization. Still being member of the PLC, Bolaños attended the inauguration of the new party and invited other liberal members and other individuals and groups to be incorporated to the new organization.

Although this situation aimed to break the bipartisanship, this did not occur with clarity in the municipal elections on November 7, 2007. The first results left the FSLN in the first place with 46% of the vote; the PLC descended to the second place with 36%, and the APRE obtained a 12% of the voting (LADB *NotiCen*, Nov. 11, 2004). Taking advantage of the division inside the right, the result was a triumph for the Sandinistas; the great loser was the PLC because lost many votes and important municipal presidencies, and besides the APRE did not achieve an encouraging result. Nevertheless, one must note that the abstentionism on that occasion was the greatest winner upon surpassing the 50% of the voters.

From the 2004 legislative elections, the perspectives of the sandinists for the 2006 presidential fight looked at themselves as something flourishing.

Nevertheless, on March 2005 also they suffered perspectives of crisis. The Managua City Hall had been earned again by the Sandinista movement, but the departing municipal president (2000-2004), Herty Lewites, had achieved such popularity that excelled also as possible national candidate of the FSLN for president, disputing the aspirations that Daniel Ortega continued maintaining in order to go for his fourth opportunity. A survey on January 2005 showed that Lewites clearly won over Ortega in the electoral preferences with a 74%. The dispute was transformed into civil war. Tomas Borge, for example, wanted to prohibit Lewites the use of the Sandinista insignia at the rallies and the songs and the hymn of the party; Ortega spoke about a conspiracy against the FSLN and called "treacherous" the former mayor of Managua; on the other hand, other leaders as Luis Carrion, Henry Ruiz and Víctor Hugo Tinoco supported Lewites. This one came to say: "It is a Sandinista rebellion against Ortega's dictatorship inside the Party… Ortega does not want to give liberty to the party in order to elect the candidate" (LADB, *NotiCen*, March 10, 2005). And this dispute was transferred to the streets between the followers of one and another. Finally, the FSLN ignored all the Lewites movement and, on March 6, 2005, organized its own congress to choose Daniel Ortega as presidential candidate for the 2006 elections, in the middle of a general applause. Later, on August 2005, Lewites, expelled from the FSLN, accepted to be a candidate by the evangelical people through the Partido Alternativa Cristiana (AC); this proposal was supported also by the Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

In the national political environment during 2005, the governability crisis in Nicaragua increased by the clash between the executive and the legislature. The president, far away of the group of followers of the former president Alemán in his own party —so much because he have sent him to prison as by the intent to create an alternative party—, and faced also against the FSLN, was found in minority in the legislative assembly. It was a governability crisis where even Miguel Insulza, General Secretary of the Organization of American States (OAS), wanted to intervene with his mediation. Daniel Ortega requested formally Bolaños' renounce so that it could be formed a Constituent Assembly proposing a new political system for the country. It was probably the mediation of the Catholic Church, calling the people and all the political forces to moderation, the most important factor so that the country could continue its course in the framework already established.

And the course then began to focus openly toward the 2006 presidential elections. The FSLN already had Daniel Ortega. Lewites was also an impor-

tant candidate by the AC. Also the businessman Eduardo Montealegre was outlined as an important candidate of the right; he has been another former mayor of Managua and had been expelled from the PLC. Montealegre formed his own party, the *Alianza Liberal Nicaraguense* (ALN), that began to do coalition with the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), with the Movement of Liberal Salvation (MSL) and with the Party of Nicaraguan Resistance (PRN). Finally, to complete the setting of the 4 most important candidates, the Vice President José Rizo Castellón renounced his position in order to be able to be considered as the PLC candidate; everyone knew that he was the man handled by Arnoldo Aleman, in his home prison. In the political classification done by diverse national and international analysts, Rizo was the ultra right, Montealegre the right, Lewites the left center, and Ortega the far left. "In the Nicaraguan electoral campaign, four political parties are presented in a predominant way: two liberals and other two that refer to the Sandinista movement. The two liberal parties are clearly in the right: on one hand, it is the party *Alianza Liberal Nicaraguense*, that has as candidate Eduardo Montealegre, and the other is the *Partido Liberal Constitucional*, postulating José Rizo as candidate. The party is joined with the current president of the Republic, Enrique Bolaños, a landowner and businessman of conservative origin, and the other is situated as inheritance of Arnoldo Aleman with his sinister reputation". (Houtart, 2006)

With this setting of political forces, practically all 2006 became an electoral campaign. Nevertheless, the electoral preferences placed the big advantage of Montealegre (with almost a 50% of preferences on February 2006); on the second place it was Lewites, and in the third place the FSLN; during only two months, nevertheless, Ortega was in the surveys even with Lewites, although both were still behind of Montealegre.[84]

It is useful to indicate the open intervention of the USA government in the electoral process of Nicaragua. The U.S sympathies for Montealegre were quite clear; the northamericans had also tightened ties with Lewites in spite of having been sandinist in previous years. The intervention was clear in order to try to impede that Daniel Ortega could arrive to the head of the

[84] According to the business M&R Consultants published in the newspaper La Prensa, the ALN with Montealegre had on April 2006 the 26% of the vote intentions; Ortega had 23.5%, and Lewites 22.3%. In that moment, the PLC was absent in the preferences because it had not nominated officially Rizo as its candidate. But already on May, the same source put Ortega with 27,9% and Montealegre with 27.2%. The third place was for Rizo and the fourth for Lewites.

government: there was an open intervention of the American ambassador Paul Trivelli, and there were explicit statements of governmental officials as Robert Zoellick, John Negroponte and Jeanne Kirkpatrick declaring their fear for the possible return of the FSLN. Even Oliver North, a North American combatant in support to the "*contras*" and who had been captured in Nicaraguan territory during the 80's, came to speak against the FSLN. "The USA Ambassador, three ministers of the Bush cabinet, and an inexhaustible list of right congresspersons offered their open voice to speak in Nicaragua; sometimes it seemed that they were candidates themselves. They took advantage of each public or private occasion to alert the electorate about the calamitous consequences of an Ortega victory —the suspension of the aid and the blockade of the remittances of the immigrants in the United States (half of the population depends directly or indirectly from these revenues); they were part of the intimidation campaign". (Bendaña, 2007)

But the Front was no longer locked only in the radical ideology of the 80's but it declared itself clearly in an intent of a very extensive coalition: in the extraordinary congress on May 2006, the total candidates list with a large amplitude of ideologies was announced publicly. There was his companion in the electoral fight, Jaime Morales Carazo, who had been member founder of the PLC and Alemán advisor during his presidency and then he had been expelled; he had been founder of the Central American University and he was businessman, banker, columnist and he had supported the "contras". In the list was also Broklin Rivera, who previously had faced the sandinists fighting for the autonomy of the natives. Then also was Agustin Jarquin Anaya, from the conservative group National Convergence. And with all of them, naturally there were traditional Sandinistas as Tomas Borge. This one expressed his consent for the diverse alliances in the following way: "We have had to make certain concessions, but still we conserve intact our fundamental principles". (LADB, *NotiCen*, Jun 8, 2006)

The setting of political forces was altered with the sudden death by a heart attack to Herty Lewites, on July 2, 2006. He did not have possibilities to win but he signified a 15% of the votes that probably were going to reduce the votes from the Sandinistas. Upon being buried, he was placed with the flag of Nicaragua and with that of the Sandinist Front. His position as candidate was occupied by the little charismatic Edmundo Jarquín (who had been postulated for Vice President) and who was accompanied by the singer Carlos Mejía Godoy in the position for the vicepresidency.

The speeches of the candidates wanted to cause the linking of their own imaginary with that of the people. For Rizo, it was the fight against the populism that so much had done damage to the country and also Latin America, marking a fear on everything that could be similar to Chavez, Castro, Morales, etc. who deceive people with their promises of puting an end to hunger and underdevelopment. Ortega had not abandoned the left flags but he wanted to show that he had left the extremisms of the military confrontation with the United States and that he was willing to establish a very extensive alliance of forces without danger for the private property and the businessmen although —quoting the words of John Paul II— he condemned "the dangers of the savage capitalism". Lewites and then Jarquin wanted to be shown as the true sandinists indicating Ortega was a traitor to the true cause of Carlos Fonseca Amador upon having become dictator inside the organization and having been an ally of the rightist former President Alemán. According to the pollster CID-Gallup, if the elections would be carried out on August 2006, "Ortega would receive more than 35% of the votes; in second place was Eduardo Montealegre… who would receive the 28% of the votes. Ortega would have obtained the victory in the first electoral round". (CID-Gallup, August 2006)

In the last phase of the campaigns a delicate theme in the national agenda arose. Jarquín, like the AC candidate and supported by the MRS, was supported also explicitly by the Autonomous Movement of Women in Nicaragua (MAM). The members of this movement were linked before with Lewites and afterwards they expressed their support to Jarquin wanting to show a common enemy, the pact between the PLC and FSLN, that has caused so many damages to the country. Their platform expressed several fundamental demands as the search of democratic institutions, a secular state, a democracy that recognize the women rights, the social justice,… But in the context of this alliance with the women, Jarquín had the following statement: "I support categorically the therapeutic abortion" (LADB, *NotiCen*, Aug. 31, 2006). In Nicaragua, the abortion was not permitted by law, but the therapeutic abortion[85] was allowed with certain conditions.

The matter was taken up to the national debate, emerging particularly the Catholic Church with the demand that the therapeutic abortion should be criminalized in the penal code, wanting to intervene in the electoral prefer-

[85] According to the old Nicaraguan law, when a woman life could be in danger, it is possible to carry out legally an abortion, keeping in mind the intervention of three medical specialists of the Health Department and the clear consent of the woman.

ences: Sócrates René Santiago, the secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua, referring to Jarquín, indicated openly: "This person cannot be chosen as president because then we will have in this office a follower of the abortion, a murderer" (LADB, *NotiCen*, Aug. 31, 2006). In this discussion, it was not only the abortion but also Jarquin's ideas about the total separation between the State and the Church.

This situation was taken by Daniel Ortega in order to have an approach with the Catholic Church. Particularly Cardinal Obando y Bravo had been important in the two previous presidential elections because he influenced the voters against the Sandinista movement, but in this occasion, in the national debate about abortion and the relations between the Church and State, an approach between both was shown. Ortega's and his wife Rosario Murillo, statements showed a turn on the traditional positions of the Sandinista movement: not to abortion, yes to life, yes to the religious beliefs. This influenced necessarily the position of the Sandinistas representatives, who managed to pass a resolution condemning any type of abortion: on October 26, the National Assembly approved the abortion penalty, condemning any doctor having performed an abortion with 10 to 20 years in prison, and the woman having made this action with 4 years in prison. The Catholic Church and the FSLN showed then a public reconciliation that could have consequences in the electoral result.

For the final results, we must keep in mind the modifications that had been done to the electoral law: If a candidate obtained at least the 35% of the voting and with an advantage of 5% on the following contender, there would be no need of a second electoral round. And thus it happened on November 5, 2006, where, with diminished preferences for the candidate Edmundo Jarquín, the situation was different to the two previous presidential elections (1996 and 2001): the division of the right was the most important thing; it gave the opportunity to the FSLN to return to the power of government, in the fourth intent of Daniel Ortega as candidate.

**Nicaragua: Presidential Elections**
**November 5, 2006**

| PARTY | CANDIDATE | RESULT |
|---|---|---|
| Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional | Daniel Ortega Saavedra | 38,07% |
| Alianza Liberal Nicaraguense | Eduardo Montealegre | 29% |
| Partido Liberal Constitucionalista | José Rizo | 26,21% |
| Movimiento de Renovación Sandinista | Edmundo Jarquín | 6,5% |
| Alternativa por el Cambio | Edén A. Pastora | Less than 1% |

*Sosurce: Consejo Supremo Electoral de Nicaragua, 2006. www.cse.gob.ni*

So much for Daniel Ortega as for any of the candidates who could have won, the biggest challenge was found in the general conditions of the country. According to the World Bank, we had the following indicators.

**General indicators in Nicaragua**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 5,48 millions |
| Income per capita | 400 USA dollars |
| Life Expectancy | 69 years |
| HDI Rank | 106 |
| Adult Literacy | 69% |
| Infant Mortality | 34/1000 births |
| Maternity Mortality | 150/100 K |
| Women Labor Force | 36% |
| Freedom of Press | 60/100 |
| Governance Percentile | 37 |
| Confidence Range | 24-47 |

*Source: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2005/*

Having passed from militarism to a democracy model with chosen civil governments was a great step in Latin America, but large sectors of the population did not experience any improvement in their standard of living; more still, under the neo-liberal model, some living conditions have been aggravated. The search of alternatives is what was carried out with many new governmental options: the Sandinista movement was 11 years in the government (1979 to 1990) and then it was defeated electorally in 1990; in 2006, they returned to the governmental power. It has been then a new opportunity to show that its proposals can be better than those of the right.

In 2012, Daniel Ortega was reelected again in the presidential elections for another 6 years in the government.

## Final considerations

If we consider the current ideology of the Sandinista movement, we can assure that the left has returned to the government in this country. We can affirm this because its main adversaries —ALN, PLC and the government of the United States— are clearly identified with the right. But it is not the sandinists radical left of the 80s because we can also affirme that the FSLN of the new century is very different from the government at that time. The new Sandinista Front has suffered many splits, it is a lot more pragmatic and has done many concessions in its program trying to be linked to a more extensive posistions of citizens, including various of its old enemies and opposed people. For many dissident groups that had splited from the Front, the Daniel Ortega and Tomas Borge positions signify a treason to the real Sandinista Revolution. Even there are some analysts who do not recognize in the Front the left ideology anymore; for example, Alejandro Bendaño, from the Center of International Studies of Managua, affirms: "One can ask what is the left, what signifies to be leftist in 2006, what signifies to be leftist in 2006 in Nicaragua, and if the victorious Sandinist Front of National Liberation (FSLN) is the left", and he responds: "The key point to be understood, especially by the progressive international organizations, is that this is not a left force that has arrived at the power in Nicaragua". (Bendaño, 2007)

But, in fact, its main electoral opponents —ALN and PLC— they were clearly identified in the right. In this manner, at least in relational terms of ideological position, the Front is at the left of them and also by its social programs. On the other hand, the confrontation with the United States or at least the search of the national autonomy instead of the subordination

to the northamerican power has also been typical of the left organizations. In this way, this historic adjective cannot be removed from the victorious sandinists. We can ask if this landslide of positions after 1990 toward more inclusive and more extensive positions is correct. But, in fact also, there are exactly these kind of alliances and this strategy with other people —considered before as enemies— what has turned out the Front as successful watching the electoral point of view.

Five elements exist that influenced in that 2006 result: in the first place, there is an organic base of militants that have remained close during all the time the organization was in the opposition to the government, in spite of the personalities and groups that decided to be separated; in second place, one must keep in mind the reforms made to the electoral law that permitted Daniel Ortega to win in 2006 in the first round with less votes than those that he had achieved in 2001. In third place, the projected imaginary on the Nicaraguan society, especially on a good number of undecided and opposing (among which, one must indicate explicitly certain reconciliation with the Catholic Church), has managed to convince on the feasibility of the project, in spite of the errors and excesses committed during the 80's. In fourth place, one must indicate the open interventionism the government of the United States had against the Sandinista Front: the shameless way in which the US showed its aversion to the organization and its electoral and its candidates reverted itself made the result a rout of the Bush administration. Finally, and the most important factor, one must consider the division of the right ideology that presented two different candidates.

In this last element, one can see clearly that if the ALN and the PLC had gone together with a single candidate, the mathematical sum of voting among both organizations (29 and 26%) would have surpassed easily the Front percentage. But the division between the president Bolaños Liberals and those of the former Aleman president was definitive. Nevertheless, for both right candidates it would have been a good opportunity if they would have a second electoral round: Ortega would have faced Montealegre, but with the great possibility that, in spite of the differences, the common enemy of the Sandinist movement would have unified both liberal sectors.

Another vision on the elements of the Sandinista victory, an analyst of the Centralamerican University explains in this way: "In the first place, the wear of the neoliberal economic model and the vote for a change. Daniel Ortega knew well how to capitalize the popular discontent by the continued deterioration of the living conditions in this Central American country…

The second factor that explains the victory of Daniel Ortega is the division of the vote against Daniel. This election had the particularity that it was not polarized in only two options Sandinista vs anti-Sandinistas movement, as occurred in the previous elections. In 2001, Daniel Ortega obtained 42,3% of the votes and he lost; and today he is winning with 38,07%. On the contrary, the vote against Daniel was unified in 2001 and permitted Enrique Bolaños' victory, candidate of the PLC and current President, with almost 56,3% of the votes. The third factor that explains Daniel Ortega victory is the reduction of the percentage of the necessary votes to obtain the victory in the first round. As it has been explained, the pact that assumed constitutional form in 2000 between Daniel Ortega and Arnoldo Alemán, permitted the reduction of the percentage to win in the first round, passing from 45% to the 40%, and even the 35% if the winning candidate was at least five points ahead of the second place candidate. This reform to the constitution and the electoral law permits in this occasion Daniel Ortega victory in the first round". (Ortega M., 2006)

The 2006 experience now will only serve so that all the contenders redefine their strategies for the future. In this moment, the FSLN, after three consecutive defeats of the same candidate, is found again, in another context, with the formidable opportunity to guide the government again and to show if it is capable of causing more benefits to the country in a better way than the right. As the Belgian priest François Houtart says, "the Sandinista Front has been damaged by some elements. The first one was the lack of ethics of some of its past and present leaders. The second reason was the logic of the political alliances made in the parliamentary democracy, in order to guarantee some portions of power, that became unbearable contradictions political and ethically. However, the Sandinist Front counts on a real popular support. It has also a clearly left government program that includes an approximation with the Latin-American progressive axis". (Houtart, 2006)

In the international environment, certainly the left tendency grows immediately, because Daniel Ortega has been linked explicitly to the project of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) very close to the governments of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia.

## 6.6. VENEZUELA: the New *Bolivarian* Project

Since the first 2006 semester, it was already outstanding in the Latin American region the politicial ascent of President Evo Morales in Bolivia and Michelle Bachelet in Chile; Couffignal has named them "emblematic elections" (Couffignal, 2007: 7). Nevertheless, in the second semester of the same year, the Latin American tendency toward the search of a change in the dominant development model was reaffirmed with clarity through the triumphs of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, the reelection of Lula da Silva in Brazil and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and the victory of Daniel Ortega of the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN) in Nicaragua. With political background of the left (the victory of Hugo Chávez in 1998 and 2000 in Venezuela, Lula da Silva in 2002 in Brazil, Kirchner in 2003 in Argentina and the triumph of Tavare Vázquez in Uruguay in 2004), the second semester of 2006 could confirm the desire of great part of the population about "deep changes in the behavior and operation of the political systems". (*Idem*, 2007: 7)

Inside all these national political changes, it is important to center the attention in Hugo Chávez, who already had appeared in the national political life as the rebelled soldier in the 90s who had been converted then in a symbol of the Bolivarian Revolution with his triumph as President of Venezuela in 1998 —the first triumph of the Latin American left using the electoral way in the contemporary period— and his subsequent ratification in 2000 after the approval of the new Bolivarian constitution. Against important people have focused their criticism such as the representatives of George Bush's American government and certain right intellectuals as Enrique Krauze that wanted to call him "a stereotyped apprentice of dictator, populist and long-winded" (Krauze, 2008) but in whose country it is being played "the destiny of all the subcontinent".

We will do our own analysis on the process of this Bolivarian Revolution locating first the general context of the country during the first period of Chávez's government and especially in the moment of his reelection as president at the end of 2006.

### Venezuela: Breaking up with the Past

For a long time, the country had been considered an example of the Latin American democracy, especially when they went from civil governments to another, from one party to another peacefuly form while in the rest of

the continent the military governments and dictatorships reigned almost everywhere. On the other hand, along with México, Venezuela seemed to have an economic solidity with the richness of petroleum since the first decades of the 20th century, what allowed a constant economic growth, at least until the collapse of the hydrocarbons prices in the 80's.

The political system integrated numerous political parties, but the governmental power stayed in a bipartisanship model that was done traditionally after 1958 with the Party Democratic Action (AD: Acción Democrática), the "*adecos*" of social democratic tendency, and the Party of Christian democracy (COPEI: Comité de Organización Politica Electoral Independiente) the "*copeianos*", with a right center ideology, founded in 1946. AD was born in 1941 as a party of centrist tendency and with ideological affinity with the social democracy and affiliation in the International Socialist. The COPEI has ideological links with the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) of México, with the Partido Popular of Spain, with the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU) of Germany, with the Christian Democratic Party of Chile. The alternation of these two parties (AD and COPEI) in the government marked the stability Venezuela during several decades, fundamentally through a pact carried out on October 31, 1958, the Pact of *Punto Fijo*, where the political parties compromised themselves to respect the electoral results.

But this model of political bipartisanship had its bases in the exploitation of the petroleum. "The Venezuelan democracy was founded by the Pact of *Punto Fijo* consolidated in the 1961 Constitution rested on a material base: the distribution of the international petroleum income through a system of patronage… The petroleum prosperity from 1973 to 1983 and the petroleum nationalization in 1976 were the culmination of this project that associated democracy, petroleum nationalism and development. The *Punto Fijo* Pact assured that money could arrive at all the social strata, and certain confidence and optimism existed that the country was prospering". (Murillo G.A., 2007: 22)

The Venezuelan left did not have an opportunity to advance while there still was a perception about a good distributive petroleum income; this perception was consolidated in the decade of the 70's with the price increase of petroleum and the 1976 nationalization of the petroleum industry; the state enlarged its income and could enlarge the public expense in social programs.

Nevertheless, a "Black Friday" occurred on February 28, 1983, when the government devalued the national currency, the *Bolívar*, on account of the

drop of petroleum prices and the economic crisis, gave a great blow to the Venezuelans under the Luis Herrera Campins Presidency, of COPEI, during the period 1979-1984. The investment, the social expense, the salaries, the GDP, the purchasing power, etc. they went downhill. The following government presided by Jaime Lusinchi (1984-1989), of AD, signified the crisis extension but accompanied by notable acts of corruption in the governmental sphere. Subsequently again Carlos Andrés Pérez was elected in 1988, of AD, who already had governed the country from 1973 to 1979 in other prosperity conditions. In 1989, the new government proposed a series of structural adjustments in the framework of the dominant neoliberalism, and implemented important privatizations in industrial sectors. The popular refusal to these measures was immediate: the measures intended to be adopted by the government were not but the antithesis of the campaign promises of Pérez (Ellner, 1998). The classical orders for austerity in the neoliberal model (cut of the investment of the state in social programs, free commerce, etc.) had serious consequences like popular protest and especially the *caracazo*, occurred on February 27, 1989, and subsequently various intents of *coup d'etat* like that of 1992 directed by Hugo Chávez. The *caracazo* consisted in a popular lifting detonated by the drivers, who, in order to face the 30% increase on the fuel, wanted to duplicate the rates of public transportation, causing an inconformity and violence that extended to 19 Venezuelan cities being prolonged until March 5th; maybe over a thousand people died. The answer of the government had been the classical repression on citizens in a indiscriminate way.

Carlos Andrés Pérez, accused by embezzlement, could not finish his presidential period and was destituted in 1993; in his place Octavio Lepage was named as provisional president and then the Congress appointed Ramon José Velázquez for the remaining time. Andrés Pérez did not only lose the presidency but also his own party, AD, expelled him from the organization, condemning the multiple acts of committed corruption in his government; in 1998, a Court ordered his arrest due to illicit enrichment and he was politically disqualified.

Rafael Caldera, who already had been a president from 1969 to 1974 by COPEI, but had been separated from that political organization and had formed the political movement *Convergencia*[86] and who had shown sympa-

[86] The *Convergencia* organization that put Caldera in the government power had a momentary success: in 2000, it had a representative in the new National Assembly but, in 2005, it had to withdrawn from the elections.

thies[87] with the *caracazo* and the popular protests, was chosen as the new President of Venezuela for the 1994-1998 period, with the support of many left groups. That 1994 was the moment of defeating the traditional bipartisanship and the end of the Pact of *Punto Fijo*, because as much AD as COPEI were displaced after having governed the country during 35 years.

Rafael Caldera, while he was a candidate, he promised to avoid the package of neoliberal reforms, but upon arriving at the presidency he adopted the program Agenda Venezuela, which, although, directed by the minister and left theoretician, Teodoro Petkoff, was not more than a similar package to that of the Pérez government, that included many privatizations. Petkoff anthem was the following: "As much market as possible, so much State as necessary" (Petkoff cited in Ellner, 1998); nevertheless, only PDVSA petroleum and the Edelca electric remained in the State; all other sectors should pass to private hands. To the wave of privatizations, there were also many proposals of laboral reforms that would put an end to the workers protection, in an intent to adapt the country to the levels of global demand.

In a similar way as what happened to Carlos Andrés Pérez, the second Caldera government was marked by the crisis, especially in the financial environment, that provoked a great leak of capitals. Caldera had promised not to respond to IMF, but he had to request this institution an emergency loan of 1.400 million dollars in 1995 to continue complying the financial commitments; he continued, besides, the privatizations politics of the previous government. His administration marks the moment in which the people rejected drastically all the traditional political parties and put the eyes on the insurgent Hugo Chávez, who, having been pardoned by the Caldera government in 1994 due to his military uprising, sought the presidency through a new organization, the *Movimiento V Republica*, in alliance with other parties.

Chávez along with other military companions, since 1982, had formed a secret organization called *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200* (MBR-200), swearing to rescue the native values, to dignify the military career and to fight against corruption. During the 80s, they carried out many contacts with left leaders of political organizations, including the guerrilla group, the Partido de la Revolucion Venezolana (PRV). The government repressive reaction to confront the *caracazo* guided them to prepare an armed insurrection

[87] In a speech pronounced in Congress in 1992, it is attributed to him the following phrase: "It is difficult to ask people to be sacrificed for liberty and democracy, when liberty and democracy are not capable of feeding". His sympathy for the popular protests helped him to win the second return to the government.

that occurred on February 4, 1992, but they failed. That day, "at 9 a.m., when Chávez understood that the main objective, the arrest of the president, was impossible to comply with, he surrendered and requested to speak on television to his comrades-in-arms to ask them to do the same and to avoid a massacre… That intervention lasted no more than one minute, but it gave face to the uprising, capturing the collective imaginary in many sectors of the population" (Murillo G. A., 2007: 34). Many participants in that rebellion were imprisoned. Nevertheless, two years later, in 1994, the new president Caldera offered a dismissal of cause; Chávez gained his liberty again and he was given to the task of building a political organization all around the country with local organizations called "Bolivarian circles".

In 1997, the MBR-200 requested its inscription in the Electoral Supreme Counsel with the intention to participate in the 1998 elections through a new name: the *Movimiento V Republica* (MVR).[88] Hugo Chavez's candidacy for the presidency on behalf of the MVR came in a context of an economic crisis and with the discredit of all the traditional political parties: his speech was radical against the neoliberal model of the country, showing himself clearly different from the majority of the political organizations that had had the power in Venezuela in the last decades, but opened to alliances with other political forces (the PPT and the MAS) integrated to the *Polo Patriotico* (PP). It was a radical position that had as an objective a total change of the country: Venezuela is not going to be fixed in a small part first and going ahead to another toward the whole. […] Here the whole is more important than the parts. Here, the whole needs to be fixed because the parts do not have any kind of arrangement". (Chavez, in Dieterich, 2004)

The two traditional parties —AD and COPEI— went in giddy descent, but other options had arisen. One of them was Irene Saez, who had been Miss Universe in 1981 and had had a local success as mayor in Chacao in 1992, where she managed to be reelected in 1995; she had formed her own political party (IRENE: *Integracion y Renovacion Nueva Esperanza*) in order to contend in the presidential campaign in 1998 but she fell in discredit upon being supported officially by COPEI:[89] she only got 3% of the national

[88] The change in the name (from MBR-200 to MVR) obeyed to the prohibition that existed in the electoral Venezuelan law to utilize the Bolivar name in the registration of any political organization.

[89] In the sudden swayings of Venezuelan politics, a few days from the presidential voting, the COPEI removed its support to Irene Saez in order to support Salas Romer in the *Projecto Venezuela*.

voting. Another case was Henrique Salas Romer, an economist formed in a North American university who had been a governor in Carabobo State and was postulated by the party *Proyecto Venezuela*; he had the support from diverse business sectors. Also, AD proposed its founder leader Luis Alfaro Lucero —afterwards, he would be expelled from that organization— to contend for the presidency, although, before the electoral process, the party removed its support in order to get Salas Romer victory.

In September 1998, Chávez was leading the electoral surveys, creating fear among businessmen and investors: "Chavez has raised the ghost of the protectionist barriers to the foreign commerce, he has threatened a moratorium for one or two years in the debt payments and he has promised to revise the concessions of the state to the petroleum companies. He has called to put an end to the privatization of the public goods at least until the country can guarantee the income to the national treasure more than to the personal accounts of the corrupt officials in Miami. For his opponents, the fall of the market, the high interests, the massive purchase of dollars and the fears of a devaluation are caused by the possibility that Chavez could win the elections… The support to Chávez is fed by the conviction of many Venezuelans that the petroleum prosperity can guarantee decent salaries, governmental services, employment security and retirement benefits. With the 80% of the population living in poverty, the opposition, compared to what is described as "a savage capitalism," has grown extensively" (LADB: Sept. 4, 1998). Hugo Chávez's had as main purpose the creation of a Constituent Assembly that could take the task of creating a new constitution seeking a total restructuring of the nation. Chávez's critics expressed their fear on a possible totalitarianism since the Constituent Assembly would open the doors to Chávez, in case of triumph, to accumulate too much power in one single person; it was also the fact about the great influence that would gain the military inside the government. (Ellner, 1998)

The results of the presidential elections were forceful: Hugo Chávez won with 56,20% of the voting; the second place was for Henrique Salas Romer with 39,97% of the votes, leaving IRENE very far away in a third place, whose candidate only obtained the 2.82%. The rest of the parties failed to arrive to the 0,5% of the general voting. (CNE, 2000)

## First years of the Government of Hugo Chávez

The decade of 1980 and 1990 coincides with the establishment of the neoliberal model in almost all Latin American countries. Thus it occurred in the same way, for example, during the 80's, in México, during Miguel de la Madrid's government, in Argentina with Carlos Menem's government. In Venezuela's case, the free commerce politics and the privatizations were implemented but in a time of economic crisis where the population only knew unemployment, inflation, lack of investment of the state in social programs, increase of poverty, elimination of subsidies and numerous public cases of corruption. If in Argentina and in Ecuador the generalized shout of the people was expressed in this way: "que se vayan todos" (lets throw them all away), in Venezuela it was the sunset time for the traditional political rulers of the last decades.

Chávez won in a forceful way in the December 6, 1998 elections through his proposal of breaking with the past and by his opposition to the wild neoliberalism model applied to the country. He took possession as president on February 4, 1999. Nevertheless, in the economic level, he carried out a moderate politics intended to fight corruption, to enlarge the tax collection and to encourage the production with certain State regulation recognizing the role of the private capital without coming at the expropriations. The 1999 context, was expressed in an economic recession aggravated with leak of capitals; but the prices elevation of the petroleum and the inflation control offered a stability panorama.

The 1999 immediate urgency —and thus he declared it in his speech the first day of his presidential period— was the convocation to create a Constituent National Assembly, to create a new Constitution; the proposal of the new national constitution was approved on December 1999. On April of this year, he called to a referendum in order to elect the Constituent National Assembly that take the task of editing the constitution and that would set the bases of the new Bolivarian nation; three months later, elections took place to appoint the representatives that would fulfill the task. The results favored the followers of the new Bolivarian project: the referendum was done to authorize the assembly that would edit the new Constitution and the *Polo Patriótico* (PP) won it with a clear result upon achieving 121 from the 131 seats.

Once the new constitution was ratified, and after six months of work, the Constituent National Assembly (ANC) was dissolved. In that period, the

constituents did a total new structuration of the Venezuelan State. What the Assembly did was not limited only to the elaboration of the new law but, by its upper constitutional faculties, it influenced the other state powers. In that sense, the Congress faculties were limited (that Congress itself would be dissolved) and they named new judges of the Supreme Court; at the same time the attorney general and the comptroller were also relieved (LADB, *NotiSur* Feb. 11, 2000). The president himself took the task of finalizing the break with the previous constitutionality, proclamaiming a "judicial emergency" and a "legislative emergency"; Chávez could take the political control of the Upper Court of Justice and of the Judicial Power. (Boersner, 2006)

Overwhelming, the text of the new Constitution was approved on December 1999 and the country acquired a new name (Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela) and the principle of a citizens permanent participation in the public decisions was expressed: "With the arrival of Hugo Chávez to power, a new constitution is approved where a decentralization model is expressed, with deep changes in terms of civic participation: this has been regulated through numerous laws and particularly with the Law of the Local Counsels of Public Planning and the law of the Communal Counsels". (Ochoa, Fuenmayor and Enriquez, 2007)

With the approval of the Constitution, new elections in 2000 were called where all the chosen officials should be again submitted to the popular vote. The elections would take place supposedly on May 2000 but on account of certain technical failures they had to be deleayed to July 30th. This decision derived in the renunciation of the members of the Electoral National Counsel (CNE); a new Counsel had to be named to resume the electoral process. The members of the new CNE, for the first time in the history of Venezuela, they were chosen by the National Legislative Commission (CLN: Comisión Legislativa Nacional)[90] from a list presented so much by the civil society, the Catholic Church as by the businessmen.

The so called "mega election" (presidential, local governments and legislatives) was carried out on July 30, 2000. Also the PP won this combat so that Chavez initiated a six years mandate with the possibility to be reelected later, what occurred in the 2006. The results of the election confirmed what the surveys predicted: Chavez's victory was overwhelming; he achieved a 59,76% while the opposing Francisco Arias Cardenas obtained the 37,52%

[90] The National Legislative Commission, whose 20 members were named by the Constituent National Assembly, was created as temporary legislative organ between the dissolution of the Assembly and the election of the new organ: the National Assembly.

of the votes (CNE, 2000). In this way, Chavez was in the presidency of the republic by a period that, thanks to the new constitution, in that moment would be for six years and with the possibility of an immediate reelection. The COPEI practically disappeared as a political force while AD only obtained 20 seats in the congress. The Chávez's popularity was extraordinary during 1998-2000 while the traditional parties seriously decayed.

The new government of President Chávez avoided the privatization process of the petroleum state business PDVSA, guaranteeing the fixed State participation in the economy under the supposed Keynesian principle that the market cannot be regulated by itself, and recognized the role the private property can play in the economic project; on the other hand, he put great emphasis in social politics, especially in the social security system taking for it the public funds of the State, wanting to guarantee all citizens their right to work, health, education, etc. At the same time, new forms of direct participation of the people in the public politics were incorporated, although big faculties were concentrated in the executive power.

To hurry the application of social politics measures, the president asked the legislators that could offer him a law that would permit him to legislate freely in social and economic matters (Boersner, 2006). The national Assembly that had a majority from the *Polo Patriótico*, in spite of the opposition intents, granted to Chavez the necessary powers to reform with discretion the way in which PDVSA operates, to approve the agrarian reform to redistribute property, and to take interference inside the Central Bank (LADB, *NotiSur*, Nov. 10, 2000). With this, Chávez could set in motion different social programs, in education and health. For it, he destined more than 2 thousand million dollars to fight poverty and to try to create 100.000 jobs in the interim of one year.

Although many opponents accused the new government as communist, especially by having a good relationship with Fidel Castro, the governmental politics had a moderate emphasis with a mixed economy system: the new emphasis was in a greater distribution of the social wealth recognizing the role of the private investment. James Petras, professor in New York State University with a radical ideological tendency, indicated that "Chávez is a politician, extremely moderate, who is attacked only by not allowing the drug caution flights in Venezuela, by being opposed to the Plan Colombia and by working with OPEC". (LADB, *NotiSur*, 22 March 2002)

From 2000 to 2002, the situation became very difficult for the government in the political and economic level: the drop of the petroleum price,

deficit in the scale of payments, leak of capitals, the re-organization of the opposition, the accusations of Bush's American government and international agencies, growth of the poverty and delinquency, etc. The New Land Law approved by the legislature establishing a maximum number of hectares for the owners (in a context where the 70% of the arable land belonged to the 3% of them) with taxes to the idle lands and threats of expropriation also caused more conflicts in the country.

Particularly, the government relation with the union workers of the State petroleum business was aggravated. The workers of the petroleum were found affiliated mainly to the Confederation of Workers of Venezuela (CTV: Confederacion de Trabajadores de Venezuela), an organization that was traditionally linked to Democratic Action (AD) and that had been discredited for its support to the neoliberal reforms of the previous governments. The relation of the CTV with the Chávez government was tense but calm during the first years. The government had favored the new group Bolivarian Force of Workers (FBT: Fuerza Bolivariana de Trabajadroes), but the CTV continued existing with its own force and chose in 2001 the new leader, Carlos Ortega. President Chávez tried to have more related union leaders to his government project, but thanks to the power of the union and to the support of international organizations (among them, the Organizacion Internacional del Trabajo: OIT), the governmental intent failed to intervene in the labor organization at the moment of the elections of the union leaders: in its internal elections on October 2001, the candidate pro-Chavez (Aristóbulo Isturiz) lost, with 16% of the votes; Carlos Ortega, who achieved the 57% of the voting won; this last, during his campaign, had indicated his objective to maintain the CTV with independence from the government. In real life, many union bureaucracies promoted the workers stopping and even sabotage as destruction of work material or blockade of the transportation and services.

The problems with the State petroleum business were extremely bad on February 2002 when Chávez, utilizing the faculties of the Executive, named a new director of PDVSA, Gastón Parra, university professor with hardly any nationalist tendencies and five of the seven members of the board of directors. His intention was to impede that this business would be "a state inside the state" and to achieve a business agreement with the politics of the Organization of petroleum-exporting Countries (OPEC). The working bureaucracy, supported by businessmen of Fedecamaras contrary to Chávez, threatened to go on strike, and the president threatened to militarize the business if perhaps PDVSA stopped working. (LADB, *NotiSur*, 22nd March 2002)

Union leader Carlos Ortega, being joined with the demand of executives and businessmen —that were his traditional enemies—, ratified the threat of a national strike; the economic effects would be of immense proportions, considering the product of the petroleum[91] since the CTV had almost a million workers. The opposition called to a "Paro cívico nacional" (not working) while the government rejected the "petroleum blackmail" and said good bye to all the executives that supported the cease of working. In fact, a non working situation began on April 9, promoted by the CTV and by the Confederacy of businessmen, supported by the TV companies, the opposing political parties and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church: they demanded the renunciation of the PDVSA 7 members of the board of directors. The situation was intensified when the union leader made a call to the armed forces to support the opposition.[92] The national strike managed to paralyze some fundamental sectors of the Venezuelan economy, especially the petroleum industry; with this, it was not affected only the internal market but Venezuela was obliged to interrupt the supply of large quantities of petroleum to the exterior.

## Coup d'etat and the Revoking Referendum

All this context was the precedent for the intent of *coup d'etat* against a democratically chosen government. Certainly, the president had been supported by many military sectors, especially those that had participated in the intent to blow the 1992 Andrés Pérez government, but other military sectors felt displaced upon being removed from their charges; these last wanted to take advantage from the discontent situation against Chávez.

On April 11, 2002, there were several demonstrations on the streets, where, with a multitude going toward the government headquarters requiring the president renunciation and having also on the streets many Chávez supporters, police officers and military, a violent clash was given and death

[91] According to the Statistical Review of world energy 2007, the Venezuela tested reserves constitute the 6,6% of the total in the world. Comparatively, Iran possesses the 11,4% and Saudi Arabia the 22%. Only the PDVSA complex in Paraguana, with capacity to produce 950 thousand barrels a day, on April 8, it seemed to be producing only 50%.

[92] It was a call of the union leader to the military in the Globovisión TV: "In a moment of crisis, the armed forces have to take the side of the people, the side of the majorities… It is an explosive situation that requires an immediate action". (LADB, *NotiSur*. April 12, 2002)

of diverse participating citizens;[93] this situation motivated a group of radical conservatives to occupy the government, and they proclaimed as the president of the Confederacy of Business Cameras (Fedecamaras), Pedro Carmona, with the support of some military groups, as the head of state, who in an immediate way dissolved the Supreme Court of Justice and the National Assembly. But the *coup d'etat* did not last more than two days, since Hugo Chávez, with great internal support (crowded demonstrations in his favor on the streets and at the international level (because he has been chosen ruler in a democratic way), recovered the control of the presidency on April 13. The president could maintain the control of the government but without abandoning his objective of restructuring the petroleum business; he did some important changes with an intent to negotiate: a new vice president, the experienced one Jose Vicente Rangel; a new head for PDVSA (with some members of the board of directors) with Alí Rodríguez Araque, previous OPEC General Secretary; the reinstallation of some executives of the business who had been fired. The president had interviews with some hierarches of the Catholic Church in April. And finally, asking pardon for the committed errors, he formed a Commission of National Dialogue to leave open a continuous channel of negotiation and to avoid future confrontations. Also, former President Jimmy Carter was invited so that he could be a mediator in the dialogue; Carter would visit Venezuela later in the month of July.

The failed *coup d'etat* left clearly that the opposition was fragmented; it was united only by the anti-Chavez sentiment: they did not have an unified alternate proposal against the Bolivarian project; the brief *coup d'etat* "did not only present doubts on the democratic credentials of the opposition; it also gave to Chávez the ideal pretext to assume control of the armed forces and to purge all dissidents" (Shifter, 2006). The opposition, disconnected and badly organized, was weakened a lot more with the capture and exile of some of its leaders; some of them were accused of civil rebellion, conspiracy and destruction.

On the other hand, although the North American government always denied it, there were many evidences of the American participation supporting those who had promoted the *coup d'etat*: according to the New York

[93] Some could calculate 40 dead persons between April 11 to 14, 2002, but officially the number of deaths investigated related to these clashes were 19; subsequently, the president requested the judicial power a serious investigation to find and to punish the responsible for these deaths. The National Assembly created a Commission of Truth with the same aim.

Times, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), institution created and financed by the American congress had channeled, in previous months, hundreds of thousands of dollars to the opposing groups to Chavez in Venezuela, including explicitly to the CTV of Ortega. Even the American military intelligence confessed to have had contacts with Venezuelan soldiers to analyze the possibility of a *coup d'etat*. The London newspaper The Guardian analyzed in this manner the U.S. intervention: "America supports the democracy when the democracy is on the American side; the decisive point is not if the citizens of the entire world have the right to choose their leaders but if the leaders of any nation —chosen freely or not—, have the right to elect a direction against what United States considers its interests in any specific moment" (LADB. *NotiSur*. May 3, 2002). Given the fact that this *coup d'etat* had occurred on April and recalling the attack to Cuba in the Bay of Pigs, Duncan Campbell, a reporter of a London newspaper, called this blow intent in Venezuela the "Bush's Bay of Piglets".

The blow failed but the doubt remained on the main instigators. The government named subsequently Danilo Anderson as special federal attendant for the investigations of the General District Attorney's Office of Venezuela to find out the conspiracy authors, being centered especially on those who had signed the support to Pedro Carmona during his two days interim, but when he was on the verge of announcing the accusations against them, he died the night on November 18, 2004 by the explosion of a car bomb.

Subsequently, the statement that the U.S. Embassy made in Caracas, in the framework of the October 2002 demostrations, removed the support to the opposition: the American government,[94] through Ambassador Charles Shapiro declared his opposition to any illegal or violent action that wanted to knock down a democratically chosen government. In practice, nevertheless, George Bush's American administration continued hindering Chávez's government in Venezuela. Subsequently on April 2005, the Venezuelan president had to cancel an agreement of military cooperation with United States that had lasted 35 years while in Venezuela he stopped various North American citizens that were taking photos of military installations; in that year, Venezuela began to sell several CITGO installations, that is branch office of PDVSA in North American territory. Another clash point between

[94] Some analysts indicate that the Bush government was seen obliged to make this statement to smooth out his position with Hugo Chávez in the context of the war preparation against Iraq; if the petroleum supplies would be cut in Irak, the United States could not endanger an important petroleum provision source as that in Venezuela.

Venezuela and the United States was the capture, on May 2005, in American territory, of Luis Posada Carriles,[95] a CIA agent who had collaborated in many terrorist acts in Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela; the Americans only apprehended him for illegal entrance into the country and they rejected all other accusations. In another confrontation episode with the United States, Chávez withdrew, on October 2005, from the anti-drugs agreement with that country, indicating that Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) were using their agents only for espionage.

In spite of the fact that the national strike cost more than 7 thousand million dollars to the Venezuelan economy, this event resulted positively in a greater political ascent of Chavez; the 2002 facts began to offer to the government a greater control of PDVSA upon locating it under the guardianship of the Minister of Energy and Petroleum and to enable a restructuring that would continue until 2003 (for example, the new Law of Hydrocarbons); although the blow to the domestic economy had been very bad. From that year on, the Venezuela petroleum began to be used in more agreement with the development programs and with a long-term vision as it is showed in the strategic plan "*Siembra Petrolera 2005-2030*". These fundamental resources in the State hands could make possible the new programs in social politics called the "Bolivarian Missions".

On the other hand, the opposition did not want to accept any mediation for dialogue; not even the presence of Jimmy Carter could achieve a direct encounter between the two forces; any way, the president of Venezuela accepted on July 2002 some of the opposition proposals presented through the American former president as the recognition of Carlos Ortega as leader of the CTV and the aid offered by the UN and the OAS to help in the negotiation process. The main demand of the opposition was reduced then to require the exit of the president by peaceful means; the idea of the revoking referendum arose. Nevertheless, the verbal clashes continued eventually: on June, there was a public video where a group of disguised military officials called themselves the "*Comacates*" making a call to kill every member of the Bolivarian Circles; on July, Los Angeles Times referred to statement made by José Antonio Gil, an important businessman, in pollsters agencies in Venezuela, where he mentioned that the only solution for the political crisis of the country was that Chavez should be murdered.

[95] Posada Carriles planned the explosion of the Cuban airplane, in 1976, coming from Caracas toward La Havana, where 73 people died. He was aprehended by this fact in Venezuela, but he escaped in 1985.

The General secretary of the Organization of the American States (OAS), Caesar Gaviria, offered himself to mediate, to begin the dialogue between the government and the opposition in order to arrive to a peaceful agreement; he visited the country, in October, in the middle of large verbal tensions and demonstrations on the streets, without getting neither direct encounters for the dialogue. Other Gaviria several visits happened in 2002 without achieving any advance.

The opposition formed its organization, the *Coordinadora Democratica*, to continue with its protests and demonstrations and trying to seek the governmental change through public pressures. But the marches and strikes of the opponents (encouraged by the businessmen of Fedecamaras and the workers united in the CVT) as that occurred on October 10 with a supposed "*toma de Caracas*" found their Nemesis in the also massive marches of the government supporters like that, two days later, on October 13.[96] In his turn, the government won the Confederacy of Petroleum Workers (Fedepetrol) upon signing a labor contract granting them a salary increase of 35% along with other benefits; the Fedepetrol then marked its distance with the opposing strikes. The projected strike of 12 hours on October 21, prompted by the *Coordinadora Democratica*, Fedecameras and the CTV had little echo and it was very differentiated: little activity in the Caracas rich neighborhoods; almost all normal in the rest of the city, especially in the poor neighborhoods. Also in October, a communiqué of 14 military officials was known: they declared themselves in civil disobedience and called all the military and the people to the Altamira Plaza in the aim of raising against Chavez, making the plaza a freed territory; some of them were accused for having participated in the *coup d'etat* on April that year. This action was condemned by Gaviria, the general secretary of OAS but was supported by the CTV and the three small opposing parties (AD, COPEI, *Primero Justicia*); the military officials said that they would not withdraw from the Plaza until Chávez renounced, but their minority action never functioned in its explicit objectives although the Plaza became center of activities of the opposition; the military sector, in a different way as it was on April, was completely with the government.

Another strike was projected on December 2, 2002, planned by the same organizers (CD, CTV, Fedecameras) in spite of the mediation of the OAS General Secretary. Also they had collected thousands of signatures request-

[96] According to the French Press agency, the two demonstrations (October 10 and 13, 2002) were immense, but that of Chávez supporters surpassed with clearly the number of the opponents that had congregated two days before.

ing the immediate removal of the president because they did not want to wait for the revocatory referendum. The result of the strike was again a partial success in some places, but among the opposition no longer was there a unity on it if it would finish in the next 72 hours or it would continue indefinitely. Because the circulation was interrupted, clashes with the police began; on December 6, there were 3 dead persons and 28 injured. But the pro-government demonstrations also happened again, especially around the massive media of communication. Again, some opponents wanted to sabotage the petroleum production and distribution in an effort that would continue until January 2003; but the PDVSA restructuration was determined, even with the project to divide into two businesses in order to achieve a greater effectiveness in its production costs; at the beginning of 2003 and with the dismissal of many directors sponsors of the sabotage, the business began to recover its production with one million Barrels daily.[97] The strike continued, but it was clear that the damage done to the economy stemmed from the strikers and not from the government; this was an important point to consider for the movement instigators; many business owners complained of not having sold anything during Christmas because they had to be closed. On January 17, the government ordered the National Guard to take of cellars full of beer, refreshments and water bottled in the Carabobo state in order to distribute them among the population; the government went convincing, on the other hand, to captains of petroleum tanks to return to their work peacefully. More than a general workers strike, since December 2, 2002, what had been orchestrated was a cease of work ordered by the owners and a series of premeditated sabotage actions against the petroleum industry.

In any way, the situation of Venezuela continued complicated and, since the international perspective, a group of 6 countries, a "group of friends", at the beginning of 2003, had the initiative to mediate in the internal conflict. This group was formed by the United States, México, Brazil, Chile, Spain and Portugal. Nevertheless, although Chávez saw well the Brazilian intervention, as a whole, he judged that the group was very influenced toward the interests of the opponents to his government and preferred to insist on the no intervention principle in internal matters. But the international incidents would not leave the internal situation like when, on May 2004, a

[97] According to President Chávez, the plan was to take up again at the end of February 2003 the production of 2 million barrels a day, although the situation before the strikes had reached 3,2 million barrels. (LADB. *NotiSur* Feb. 28,2003)

network of paramilitary Colombians on the outskirts of Caracas was dismantled; several of the Colombian arrested carried Venezuelan military uniforms. Subsequently, on October 2004, six soldiers and a PDVSA engineer were murdered in the surrounding area of the border with Colombia. Due to the contrast of governmental projects between Venezuela and Colombia, the tensions were scaling; the moment of breaking the trade relations came when, on December 2004, people hired by the Colombian Minister of Defense abducted in Caracas the spokesman of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and took him to the neighboring country, causing a diplomatic crisis that could only be reduced on February 2005, with the mediation of various countries and with a direct encounter between the two presidents Chavez and Uribe.

The opponents handled numerous possible options: immediate resign of the president, a decisive referendum, a reduction of the presidential term from six to four years, the revoking referendum established by the constitution. An enormous economic damage had been caused to the country without having achieved the movement objectives, but just then in that moment, there was the need to reconsider the options since Chávez emerged politically with more strenght. It was until February 18, 2003, when it had a partial success in the César Gaviria mediation, the General Secretary of the OAS, because he achieved a joined declaration so that government and opposition signed a commitment against political violence, declaring it "completely unjustifiable": there were eight points in the agreement against the violence and in favor of peace and democracy inside the constitutional framework.

Nevertheless, the tensions continued and they were expressed especially in the discussion of the new law proposal on the massive media of communication; the Law of Social Responsibility for Radio and Television, on February, wanted to put legal limits to these media. Most of the radio and private television media had participated actively in favor of the opposition, instigating even to the violence against the government: Venevision, Globovision, Radio Caracas Televisión, Televen, the regional station Tachira. Besides, the government accused formally and ordered the arrest the leader of Fedecamaras, Carlos Fernández, and the leader of CTV, Carlos Ortega; the accusation was treason and rebellion (implying them in the *coup d'etat* on April 2002), sabotage, economic destruction, conspiracy (all these related to the strike begun on December). The treason and rebellion charges for Fernández were rejected but he remained only in house arrest, and then took refuge in the United States; Carlos Ortega could be hidden for a time

and sought then asylum in Costa Rica, that was offered to him on March 2003. In the middle of 2002, Pedro Carmona, the previous president of Fedecameras and president of Venezuela for only two days in the ephemeral *coup d'etat* on April, had been arrested and had asked for asylum in Colombia, that was offered to him afterwards. On the other hand, on February, the minister of Energy and Mines confirmed that they had fired 9,000 PVDSA employees who had participated in the strike and sabotaged the business; it was ordered the detention of some directors implied in the same thing, although subsequently the charges were rejected. In the economic environment, to avoid the leak of capitals and to stabilize the international reserves, the government established an exchange rate and prohibited the transfers of current money to the outside of the country if they do not have authorization from the Currencies Administration Commission.

The legal framework to seek the Chávez's dismissal was given by the constitution approved at the beginning of the government, because there the possibility of a revoking referendum was possible: the possibility to decide the continuation of the exercise of the president and other officials, halfway of their period, through a civic consultation; and this was finally the way the opposition had to accept after the failure of the two months strike (from December 2, 2002 to February 3 2003). It was a discouraged and divided opposition that had to accept verbally, with the mediation of the general secretary of the OAS, on April 2003, the revoking referendum as the only way to get its aims, being adhered completely to the Venezuela Constitution and to the principles of the OAS *Carta Democrática*. The agreement was signed officially on May 29 2003, and kept in mind that the referendum should occur after August 19 and should have the immediate task to comply with the legal demand to collect 2,5 million signatures, that signified the 20% of the electorate. Submitting the president under the constitutional framework created by the government itself was the only possibility.

April was also the occasion to celebrate, especially for the Chávez's supporters, the first anniversary of the failure of the 2002 *coup d'etat*, an occasion where the president presented again the features of the Bolivarian Revolution: the fight against global imperialism and the so called "wild neoliberalism", the fight against the "fascist oligarchy", the fight for the continental independence and the "globalization of the Revolution" (LADB, *NotiSur*, April 25, 2003). Each time, especially in the international settings, Hugo Chávez took advantage of each moment to define the characteristics of his bolivarian project; thus he did it also, for example, in the summit

of the G-15, at the end of February 2004, when he criticized severely the neoliberal model that has damaged the Latin American countries in previous years so much, being created a gigantic abyss between the North and the South: "The globalization has not brought a supposed interdependency but a deepening of the dependence; more than globalizing the health, it is poverty what has been expanded". (LADB, *NotiSur*, March 5, 2004)

Eventhough, an agreement between opposition and the government had been reached for a peaceful solution of the conflicts. Once the referendum has been agreed accepting the mediation of the OAS, of the Carter Center in Atlanta and of the United Nations, the opposition should present the signatures so that the consultation could take place. Those who wanted to remove Chávez from the presidency, anticipated themselves before the agreement was official and they began to collect signatures; but these were appealed by the Executive, arguing legally that the signatures should be collected from the moment that the referendum had been agreed officially. According to the law, they would neither count the signatures of the Venezuelans from abroad. It was needed, besides, that the votes in favor of the president removal surpassed the votes he obtained in the 2000 elections: the opposition should get 3,8 million votes against Chávez since he had been chosen with the 60% of the voting. New authorities in an Electoral National Counsel should be named again. But the conditions were different regarding the previous year: in 2002, the opposition had thousands of people out on the streets, segments of soldiers to its favor and numerous executives of the petroleum business in the movement; in 2003, all these had been weakened.

On August 2003, the High Court of Justice named the members of the Electoral National Counsel (CNE). Its work should be immediate to validate the 3,3 million signatures that the *Coordinadora Democrática* was trying to present requesting the removal; it should resolve about many demands for the revoking referendum in the regional and municipal authorities, and it should revise and clean the electoral register. Due to the irregularities presented in the signatures (especially because many were collected on February and not from August 19), the CNE judged the invalidity of the signatures presented by the CD on September 12 2003. Again, the process of harvesting signatures by the opposition began, but establishing that they were not valid from those who were living out of the country, because it was impossible to supervise them. By their side, the Chávez followers were also given to the task to collect signatures but to request a revoking referendum on the

legislators who were against the Bolivarian project also. This type of political actions would continue in 2004 when the opposition, for example, raised an accusation against the Chávez government by crimes against humanity, by murder and torture with political motives, presented to the International Penal Court at The Hague, Holland, during March and April 2004, wanting to present numerous political violence victims cases; in its turn, the government expressed, subsequently, its intention of presenting a demand on crimes against humanity, focusing the murder of 62 rural leaders supporters of the president that had been murdered in the states of Zulia, Apure and Tachira by elements from the opposition.

Government and opposition were given to the task to settle their differences in the constitutional framework, but eventually the spirits exploited again. Thus it occurred in the last week on February 2004, when Caracas was the headquarters for the meeting of the G-15,[98] an original group of 15 countries (afterwards, it was elevated to 19), when the opponents collided violently with the Venezuelan National Guard, attracting also thousands of supporters of the government. There was a dead person and some were injured. The opposition wanted to attract international attention on the dates in which the Electoral National Commission (CNE) should announce its decision on the validity of the firms for the referendum; that official position was brought to light at the beginning of March 2003 when the CNE determined that the signatures presented by the opponents, 1,1 million had serious irregularities[99] with serious doubts; in this way, only 1.832.493 signatures were recognized as valid and therefore 600.000 more were necessary to come to 2,4 millions signatures needed, according to the law: during the first week on March many street protests produced 9 dead persons and 110 injured, according to the report of the police, between February 27 and March 4. In this context, on March 9, the anti-Chavez representatives went to the Supreme Electoral Court to ask the annulment of the CNE decision.

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[98] This G-15 had been formed in 1989 by Algeria, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesian, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaya, México, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Perú, Senegal, Venezuela and Simbawe. Its aim was to create a stable consultative forum to promote the cooperation among them. Venezuela had the presidency since 2001.

[99] The errors consisted in the following: there were the names of the people but there were no signatures, there were persones under age; there were dead people names, names of people living abroad or who were not in the electoral poll, there were some signatures put by the same person, etc.

After the appeals of the opposition, the electoral institutions determined on June 8 that the date for the revoking referendum was set for August 15, 2004.[100] The two contenders accepted fully the decision and they celebrated it with marches; they began to work immediately in order to win the vote of the population. For Chávez, the referendum constituted a fundamental battle against the Venezuelan local oligarchy and especially against Bush and the North American intervention.

The challenge in this situation was to guarantee for both parts a transparent voting. The OAS and the Carter Center caution was accepted, but there were also many international guests and personalities and organizations of the civil society to monitor the process. In this way, Venezuela had the presence of such personalities as Raúl Alfonsín, Eduardo Duhalde, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachov, Gabriel García Márquez, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Belisario Betancourt, Rodrigo Carazo, Eduardo Galeano, Joseph Stiglitz, Noam Chomsky and other artists, governmental officials, archbishops, etc.

For the CNE, there were 13,9 million Venezuelans registered that could participate; among them there were 31 thousand Venezuelans living abroad that could be able to vote in the embassies: the YES implied that Chávez should leave his post as president; the NO signified that he should finish his mandate until the 2006 elections.

The results were again forceful in the 8th occasion in which Chávez was faced electorally by his opponents during 5 years of government: the president was reaffirmed in his post upon obtaining the NO the 58,25% (4.991.483) of the votes while the opposition who desired him to withdraw only achieved the 41,74% (3.576.517) (LADB. *NotiSur*. August 20, 2004). The result was vouched for by the Carter Center and by the OAS, in spite of the fraud accusations coming from those who did not wanted to accept the result. This referendum signified the deepening of the democratic Bolivarian project, that had extensive support of the population.

Harnecker analyzes in this way the three opposition large routs that had given great triumphs to the President of Venezuela in the political arena and in the demoracy: "The failure of the military coup on April 2002 (more than 80% of the generals with operational command maintained faithful to Chávez and to the constitution) constitutes the first great rout of the

[100] Uncertain things remained for the case that Chávez could have lost the election. If the decision was given before August 19, new elections would had be done, but it was not clear if Chávez could be able to be candidate again; if the result was given after August 19, Vice President José Vicente Rangél would become president without the need of new elections.

opposition and a true gift for Chávez… They created favorable space to advance in the purification of the military institution… The frustrated intent to stop the country on December 2, 2002 was the second great defeat for the opposition. The country did not stop. Chavez was not folded. But the most important, the petroleum industry passed since then really to be in control of the Venezuelan State… By their subversive and saboteur attitude, 18 thousand high and medium managerial directors who were opposed to the government —and that in fact exercised the control of the business company— created the conditions so that they could be legally fired. The ratification of President Chávez mandate in the revoking referendum on August 15, 2004 —an unknown process in the world history— was the third great rout that suffered the Venezuelan opposition in its intent to finish the presidente Chávez government". (Harnecker, 2007)

## Toward the 2006 Presidential Elections

The problems of Venezuela come from many previous decades, where all the petroleum wealth has not been capable of being overflowed toward the majority of the people. Nevertheless, until the 70's of the 20th century, the country seemed to have a political stability. The situation changed radically with the application of the neoliberal model in the 80's because the wealth concentration in very few hands and the flagrant corruption of the political parties' rulers was clear. The Chávez-phenomenon is a protest reaction where by political media in the electoral democracy framework, it produced a radical change of orientation. The new political project of the president succeeds in spite of the strong and successive attack of the opposition, but the country did not have yet large structural changes during the first years of the 21st century,. These are, for example, the Venezuela general data that the World Bank offered to us:

**Venezuela 2005**:
**general data**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 25,55 millions |
| Income per capita | 4.310 USA dollars |
| Life Expectancy | 73 years |

| | |
|---|---|
| HDI Rank | 61 |
| Adult Literacy | 93% |
| Infant Mortality | 20/1000 births |
| Maternity Mortality | 60/100K |
| Women Labor Force | 35% |
| Freedom of Press | 66/100 |
| Governance Percentile | 17 |
| Confidence Range | 11-26 |

*Source: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2005/*

The indicators declared in the Human Development Index (HDI: place number 61) are fundamental to see comparatively how other countries as México, Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay are found above Venezuela combining the established criteria about income, health and education. The governance percentile can be noted because it is very low, keeping in mind the unstable political situation during the first years of the government of Chávez. Nevertheless, it is the people perception on the country development what produces the later confidence in the president project. And that confidence should be supported in real activities of the government.

The referendum victory offered the opportunity to consolidate Chavez's presidency, implementing the specific features of the Bolivarian project, in the context of a process of economic recovery after the crisis years. One of those essential features was to deepen the use of the petroleum wealth for social benefit, something that already had begun in the first years of government and that has been recognized internationally: "The increase of the social investment during the Chavez governement has been really stimulating; thus this is proved by the indicators of human development handled by the United Nations and by the evaluations of the results in the so called *Chávez social missions*". (Samper, 2006)

Another of the fundamental elements of this project was the agrarian reform where, according to the 1998 census, the 60% of the land was property of less than 1% of the population. Since the 2001 agrarian law, the government could expropriate idle lands or lands where the supposed owners did not accredit legally the property. In 2005, the plan of the agrarian department was to take 96.570 hectares of land and to offer them to the

dispossessed, with which the government was accused of communism by the opposition; many of the landowners prepared to form their own paramilitary bands to impede the reform.

In any case, the land distribution project was deepened during that year: the expropriations were implemented and they were accompanied by legal imdemnification to the legitimate owners; this, nevertheless, did not stop the accusations against the government by attempting against the private property.

Another great project initiated on July 24, 2005, was TELESUR, with 24 hours a day transmission, collaborating with other South American countries. This project intended to counteract the cultural influence of the American television as CNN or Univisión, offering a vision from the south with another type of interpretation and analysis about what happens in Latin America and the entire world. The project took place with an initial investment of 2,5 million dollars and it has its headquarters in Caracas: Venzuela has 51% of the actions, Argentina 20%, Cuba 19% and Uruguay 10%. Nevertheless, the network has correspondents in many Latin-American nations, even in the United States. It is a matter of an ambitious cultural project that will try to offer an image of the south by the south, counteracting the visions distorted that are given from the north. Telesur is compared in its level with other large projects of Latin American integration as Petrosur and Petrocaribe, that offer petroleum resources to other countries in preferential conditions. At the same time, on October 2005, the president announced his intention to request the entrance of Venezuela as formal member of MERCOSUR, one of the countries association of South America[101] that seek a more solid integration and less dependent of the United States. In counterpart, due to the free commerce treaties with United States of some Andean countries, Venezuela would threaten then on April 2006 with leaving the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). In the same regional environment, another great project is the Southern Bank that would be in action until 2007.

[101] On December 2004, in Cusco, Perú, the South American Community of Nations was born, and then it would be transformed into Union of Southern Nations (UNASUR). It is one of the greatest project of South American integration; from a more regional perspective, MERCOSUR is one of the most solid projects and within it is the plan, for example, for a construction of the big duct of natural gas going through the Amazones with a length of 10 thousand kilometers and that it would go from Venezuela to Argentina, crossing Brazil, as it was announced on January 2006.

The government made another strong movement in the economy when in October 2005 decided to withdraw its foreign reserves from the American banks in order to transfer them to Europe; it was a quantity of 20 thousand million dollars, according to the Central Bank of Venezuela. The Bank reasons were financial in nature due to the dollar devaluation by the great American deficit and to the Euro elevation, although some analysts saw also reasons at the political level and a smaller autonomy of the central bank.

In all these projects, the framework of a revolutionary process with great support of the majority of the people was consolidated and it could give another course to the country and to which Chávez put an adjective: "Already it is an ethical revolution, in the sense that people can be organized and they can go out peacefully to ask for something and they can be attended by a ruler, by a group of rulers. There is an ethical change. We have been tying the rope that had been broken here. That is already an ethical revolution, seeing the behavior of both actors: the mass disinherited and the ruler that feels legitimate representative of this mass. There is an ethical revolution. And it is just the beginning". (Chávez, in Dieterich, 2004: 70)

The tremendous blow of the rout paralyzed the opposition and left it without initiative. The same situation of the August referendum was repeated in the state and local elections on October 31, 2004, where the government won 20 of the 22 states of the country, again through transparent elections; from the 337 municipal presidencies, the followers of the president won 270.

Watching the governmental projects, the opposition had always a refusal but with a passive attitude and without a leader to unite it. Thus the time of the parliamentary elections arrived on December 4, 2005, where all the opponents preffered the abstentionism: they decided not to participate in the assemblies, saying that there were uneven and unjust conditions for the participation, in an intent to delegitimize the government. Some parties as Democratic Action (AD), Project Venezuela (PV), First Justice (PJ), COPEI,… carried out explicitly boycott actions. Nevertheless, the strategy was not good for them, because the partisans of the Chávez project got a total control of the National Assembly, in spite of the opposition abstentionism: the *Movimiento V República* (MVR) won 114 seats in the Assembly and the rest of positions remained for all the partisan parties of the government. With some claims about irregularities, the elections were declared just and transparent by the agents monitoring them coming from Europe and the OAS, making only some critics to the president by the excessive use of the mass media. The process was developed with calm: there was an explosion

occurred during the previous night to the election, when strangers destroyed part of the pipeline going to Paraguana.

With the electoral triumph in the legislative assembly on December 2005, the panorama for the elections of the following year was very clear, against an opposition whose main error was the division, the lack of organization, the selection of a bad strategy; Chávez identified big social problems, the opposition refused acknowledge them. (Shifter, 2006)

With a defeated opposition and with the total support of the legislative assembly, Chávez continued with his reforms proposed in 2006, but in this enthusiasm for the future he began to submit to the population the question about his possible reelection in the successive terms, if the opposition continued without participation in the electoral processes; on May 6, 2006, in a speech to his supporters in the Lara State he proposed the following thing to them: "I am going to ask you, to all the people, if they agree that Chavez could be president until 2031" (LADB. *NotiSur*, July 21, 2006). And he expressed his purpose to call to a referendum in order to see if the people wanted him as president in an indefinite time.

Nevertheless, some opposition leaders began to declare themselves as possible candidates against the president. It was the case, for example, of Teodoro Petkoff, 74 years old and old sympathizer of the guerrilla warfare in Cuba and who was separated from the Communist Party of Venezuela in order to form the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) as political party; he had collaborated with President Rafael Caldera in the decade of 1990 and then he had become a heritage critical of Chávez. Also, Julio Borges, from the party First Justice, wanted to be the presidential candidate; and also the same thing wanted the governor of the Zulia state, Manuel Rosales, 54 years old, postulated by the organization *Un Nuevo Tiempo* (A new time). Roberto Smith Perera wanted also to compete by the party *Venezuela de Primera*.

The opposing groups began to learn from the past experience and they tried to resolve their differences with the objective to achieve only one candidate that could face Chávez. It was a difficult process, but on August 2006 it was done with the popularity of the governor of Zulia and old municipal president of Maracaibo, Manuel Rosales, so that the diverse groups could have a convergence in their proposal. As much Petkoff as Borges and Smith desisted of their candidacies in order to support Rosales as only candidate from all the current anti-Chavez; ten possible candidates desisted and then joined the governor of Zulia, although in practice there were more candi-

dates[102] aside from the two main contenders. Any way, the anti-Chávez people had achieved a unit that had been unthinkable in the past: extremists of left, extremists of right, industrials, union bureaucracies, some intellectuals.

Manuel Rosales implemented a good speech to win the imaginary of the diverse social classes. For him, Chavez had divided the society; his objective would be to work so much for the rich as for the poor, without squandering in weapons and Russian rifles and without useless clashes with the United States; he also intended to fight efficiently the insecurity level and the existing delinquency in the country. The government called him the candidate of the oligarchy and an instrument of imperialism, particularly in behalf of George Bush. The fortress of Chávez was in his popularity as a social fighter, focusing the petroleoum resources for the first time toward the social politics and being declared the leader of the Bolivarian Revolution against neoliberalism and capitalism.

Once more, on December 3 2006, with elections again monitored by international agencies, Hugo Chávez obtained a devastating victory upon obtaining, according to the CNE, on December 5, a 62,84% of the votes (7.161.637); far from him was Manuel Rosales, who represented the voice of an unified opposition but that capitalized only the 36,9% of the votes (4.196,329). With a 25% abstentionism in a country where the vote is free, more than 11 million Venezuelans presented themselves to elect the president.

**Elections**: **December 3, 2006**

| **PARTY** | **CANDIDATE** | **RESULT** |
|---|---|---|
| Movimiento V República | Hugo Chávez Farias | 62,84% |
| Un Nuevo Tiempo Contigo | Manuel Rosales | 36,90% |

*Source: Consejo Nacional Electoral de Venezuela: www.cne.gov.ve*

[102] It was also Benjamín Rausseo, a comedian of high popularity, who was postulated by the new party *PIEDRA*, but he withdrew on November, seeing that he did not have possibilities of winning. At the end there were other 12 candidates that competed for the presidency (Luis Reyes, Venezuela da Silva, Carmelo Romano, Alejandro Suárez, Eudes Vera, Carolina Contreras, Pedro Aranguren, José Tineo, Judith Salazar, Ángel Irigoyen, Homer Rodríguez, Isbelia León) but all of them would be insignificant in the December election when none of them got 0,5% of the general voting.

In its route, the opposition in Venezuela advanced in the institutional framework of the electoral democracy: it had managed to unify and to participate, and Rosales recognized officially the rout. Ernesto Samper, former president of Colombia, indicated this: "The opposition to president Chavez managed to be visible in the last elections, it was more compacted, sent coherent messages and obtained some worthly results as the immediate recognition of its rout coming from the losing candidate" (Samper, 2006). In itself, this already was a great step ahead for the institutional political life.

The president, in his victory speech after the official announcement of the CNE, referred this as the triumph of the Venezuelan revolution: "Those that voted for me, they did it not for me. They voted for socialism, to build a Venezuela completely different". He would have another six more years for governing and continuing this project where the petroleum income[103] was in ascent and the results of a consolidated economy would be destined to the social programs (subsidized food, free education, special aid for single mothers, health care, agrarian cooperatives, etc.) and, besides, he promised to submit to the population the possibility to continue as president after 2012. The troubled relation with the United States was also alluded by the president: "Another rout of the devil, who tries to dominate the world".

Finally, the day he was president for the next six years, he did an important reference to the way of living in his government through a democratic system. Nine times he repeated the word "democracy" in his speech when he took office, especially when he spoke about the socialism of the 21st century. The democracy is "the golden rule" for all the process because the fundamental thing is that "we assume the decision of the majority". And in this, the Venezuelan process since 1998 has given an irrefutable guideline: the majority support for his election, the majority support for the constitution of the Bolivarian republic of Venezuela, the majority support to defeat the forces that supported the *coup d'etat*, the majority support to his reelection in 2006: "Here there is an existing will of the majority imposed by democracy". And this situation then includes continuously an ideological fight, searching that the governmental project could prevail with the support of the people.

Chávez compares in fact the previous governments of the Pact of *Punto Fijo* with a dictatorship because there was a minority imposition of interests prevailing over the majority of the people: "¡Dictatorship! And still, still

[103] The price of the oil barrel had gone up to 60 dollars in November of 2006.

today we have in Venezuela the traces of that dictatorship that intends to revert the revolutionary democracy, that intends to impose its will from a minority to the majority". Therefore he recalls the cases of the intent of the 2002 *coup d'etat*, and especially the national and international pressures of the right to provoke that a private television network could prevail when its concession was finished.

But also, on January 2007, he spoke about his proposal of a new reform to the constitution where among other important things in order to accelerate the changes of the country, the controversial point was already announced with the possibility of an indefinite reelection as the President of the Republic. And Chávez also advanced his position because people are entitled to be consulted about the reform proposal: "The most important thing is that the people is going to take the decisions… Democracy! Nothing can be done if people does not approve it. If the proposal is rejected, I will be the first one applauding it". And on this point, the presidential words were prophetic, because really, during 2007, the constitutional reform was presented and was carried to a referendum on December; the decision, with a most minimum margin, was of refusal to the governmental proposal. With it, Chávez and all the government had to obey the majority decision; his presidential period could finish then at the beginning of the 2013. Nevertheless, another referendum was made February 2009 and the constitution was reformed giving to Chavez and other leaders the possibility to present themselves as candidates in 2013.

Next to the victory of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, in 2006, the Chavez reelection emphasized also an anti-capitalist position and against the free market. The tendency toward the search of new alternatives to neoliberalism, given its failure at the production level because it was not a stable development model of economic growth and with a good distribution of the social wealth, was strengthened at the end of 2006. Criticizing the Washington Consensus, for example, Ernesto Samper, the former President of Colombia mentioned the following: "The neoliberal model of the 90s was not capable to generate growth neither, much less, equity. The *social axis* that has come emerging in the hemisphere as a reaction to the old paradigm and in which the governments of Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Panamá and, more recently, Nicaragua and Ecuador participate today is seen reinforced with the reelection of the President Chávez. The implicit review of all these projects on the concept of the market and the insistence in preserving some State interventions as Joseph Stiglitz proposes

it, and to attend, in each economy, its own specificities like Dani Rodrik suggests it, are forming a new model of development in the region, more just, more diversified and, why not, more sovereign. When all these government plans can go endorsed and legitimized in democratic ways, as it has just happened in Venezuela, the region will go advancing on the road of defining its own agenda set against the globalization imperative that still today is overflowing it" (Samper, 2006). The new governability of Latin America will be depending on these new alternatives and their consolidation.

# Chapter VII
# The Center-Left in 2007: Guatemala and Argentina

## 7.1. GUATEMALA: Transition to Social Democracy?[104]

In contrast with the year 2006 in which 12 presidential power transitions took place in Latin America, during the year 2007 there were only two presidential processes: the first one in Guatemala on September 9th, which had the need of a second electoral round the 4th of November just between two candidates. The second in Argentina on the 28th of October, that did not need a second electoral round when it was known the legal percentage attained and Cristina (Kirchner) Fernández was declared as President of the Country.

The overview in 2007 gave a great surprise in Guatemala because, although there were civil governments since the decade of the 80's, the people only have elected candidates of the right, linked to economic oligarchic groups; the triumph of Álvaro Colóm, with a clearly declared social democracy tendency, once again reminds the beginnings of the government of Arévalo and Árbenz in the 50's. By the same token, without being a great surprise in relation to the government of Néstor Kirchner, the triumph of Cristina Fernández represents continuity with respect to her husband, but that clearly differentiates from the neoliberal model of Carlos Menem, president during two terms in the 90's and who ran for president again in 2003.

After 1954, Guatemala lived 32 years of militarism and dictatorship with more than 200 thousand victims. The transition to democracy during the

[104] This work had the support of Miguel Angel Torres, student of International Relations at ITESO checking information sources and in the discussion of the final paper.

1985 electoral process was celebrated with the Vinicio Cerezo civil government. But the critical situation of the country in the economic and political level did not vary with the right wing civil governments and, because of it, we have been surprised by the november 2007 presidential elections, with the triumph of Álvaro Colom; the new president had a declared social democratic tendency that recalls the change approaches of the Jacobo Arbenz ousted government in 1954.

In the first part of this chapter, we will try to summarize the Guatemalan historic context in its transition from the civil war to the peace agreements of 1996, arriving to the 2007 elections. During this electoral fight, the great combat was between the positions of the two main presidential candidates; the result was the winning project of the new president Colom. Nevertheless, the defeated candidate in 2007 could win the presidential elections in 2011.

## From the Civil War to Peace Agreements

The October 20, 1944 movement in Guatemala organized against the dictatorship of the General Ponce offered the country, for the first time in its history since the independence in 1823, the opportunity of greater political liberties and, particularly, the possibility to organize a competitive electoral process. With a new constitution, Juan Jose Arevalo assumed the presidency with the 86% of the votes in 1945 and initiated a phase of reforms, suppressing forced labor on the natives, allowing the free unionization of the workers, the establishment of a minimum wage, and the creation of the social security institutions. These tasks were emphasized by the following president Juan Jacobo Árbenz, who in a particular way proposed the initiative of the agrarian reform, with which the government began to expropriate thousands of hectares of land in favor of the peasants.

After a phase of 10 years of democracy and reforms, on September 1, 1954, Jacobo Árbenz was ousted by Guatemalan soldiers supported by the economic oligarchy of the country, by the United Fruit Co. (that had felt itself affected by the project of the agrarian reform) and by the U.S. Government, including the contribution of the Nicaragua and Honduras governments. Monterroso describes it this way: "The government of the United States decided in 1954 to oust the government legitimately constituted of Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, and finished with just a single blow with the democratic intent and with the aspirations for a better life of our native majorities,

and of the Guatemalan workers in general, in the city and in rural areas" (Monterroso, 1996). Colonel Castillo Armas imposed himself and began dismantling the reforms of the two previous governments: the lands were returned to their old owners and the liberties offered by the Constitution were suppressed. The same Constitution was modified in February 1956, being established a state of pursuit and repression on the supporters of the preceding governments and on all the popular movements.

This situation and the lack of political ways to solve the internal oppression caused the start of the armed conflict in Guatemala in 1960: guerrillas organizations arose to face the government army; the people formed various groups that finally agglutinated in the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (Unión Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca: URNG).[105] A situation of war was caused during nearly 40 years that had a high social cost. In December of 1996, the Commission for the Defense of the Human Rights in Central America (CODEHUCA) announced: 150.000 dead, 50.000 disappeared, and a million displaced persons. In a special way, the CODEHUCA emphasizes: "United States is responsible for the abuses of the human rights in Guatemala, just like the governments of Israel, Taiwan, South Korea and in its moment Chile and Argentina (during the militar dictatorships), by the financing and the advising given to the Guatemalan soldiers, to whom they taught techniques of torture and forced disappearance" (Shetemul H., 1996). Another source indicates that "the result of the 36 years of civil war in Guatemala was of 100 thousand dead persons, 40 thousand disappeared, 50 thousand refugees abroad, 1 million displaced persons to other places of the country, 450 villages devastated, 200 thousand orphans, 40 thousand widows and 400 secret common graves, 600 collective killings, more than 23 thousand cases of arbitrary executions, more than 6 thousand cases of missing persons in a country with a population of almost 11 million inhabitants. In 42 thousand cases, the 83% of the victims were Mayan. The 93% of the crimes were carried out by the State and the 83% directly by the army".[106]

In 1966, there was another moment where it could have been taken up again the participation of the opposition by the electoral way when the guer-

[105] The URNG was created from a process of unification of diverse guerrilla groups: the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT), the Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP), and the Organizacion del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA).

[106] Documents of geocities.com in the next webpage: www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/3731/guerra.html

rilla warfare supported the Partido Revolucionario (PR), that was proclaimed like the heir of the revolution of 1944-54 and wanted to participate in the political life. Nevertheless, when Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro, the PR candidate won, the government launched again the force of the army against the guerrilla movement, in a confrontation that lasted several decades.

It was until the 1985 elections when the government passed from military hands to civilian authorities, in the person of Vinicio Cerezo, president of the Republic from 1986 to 1991, with the Partido de la Democracia Cristiana. Nevertheless, the power of the soldiers was maintained almost intact: "The chosen government of President Cerezo fails to put an end to the repressive methods just as it fails to modify the counterrevolutionary devices that justify them and make them possible. Under the Christian Democratic Government there was no less than 2,000 violent deaths, mostly out-of-court executions, and 500 kidnapped people just vanished" (Rouquié A., 1994: 325). The structure of the militarization of the country inside the civil governments remained: "The total militarization of the country signifies that very few places and activities did not suffer the intervention of the Army… The militarization of the country meant a growth of expenses of the Department of Defense, which takes not less than 40% of the national budget". (Piedrasanta in Medina, 1997)

After all this bloody period, on December 29, 1996, the "Final Agreement for a solid and lasting peace" between the president Álvaro Arzú (Partido de Avanzada Nacional: PAN) and the representatives of the guerrillas organizations that integrated the Union Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) was signed. The agreement of peace with the government of Alvaro Arzu was symbolized, on behalf of the URNG, with the signing of Ricardo Ramirez —Rolando Moran—, from the EGP, of Jorge Soto —Pablo Monsanto— from the FAR, of Ricardo Rosales —Carlos González— from the PGT, and of Jorge Rosal, from the ORPA. The agreement established the cessation of hostilities between government and insurgency, the gradual insertion of the combatants in the national political life, the possibility of conversion of the URNG into a political party, and an amnesty for those —so much in the Army as in the guerrilla warfare— who had committed violations against the human rights.

Ricardo Ramírez, one of the leaders of the old guerrilla warfare, during the signing of the peace agreement, said this: "The armed fight was inevitable when all political ways to recover democracy were suppressed" (IRIPAZ, 1996:123). But the conditions had changed. On the one hand, the guerrilla warfare un-

derstood that it was not already in conditions to aspire to conquer the political power in the country by the armed way. "After 30 years of war, the guerrilla warfare weakened, dispersed, cannot aspire to take the power" (Rouquié A., 1994:325). And, on the other hand, the Guatemalan government, in spite of the bloody repression, could neither aspire to a forceful victory on the armed movement. The need of dialogue emerged, therefore, from the acceptance of the impossibility to defeat completely the adversary. Also, the regional political context with the intervention of the Grupo de Contadora[107] and the meeting of Central American presidents in Esquipulas[108] finally encouraged also the process to finish an armed conflict that was already suffocating the economy of the zone and irritating the problems more than resolving them.

"Internally, from 1982, Guatemala initiated a transition process to democracy that, although slow course, modified the positionings written down in the authoritarianism and the ideology that had not done feasible the start of the negotiation. In fact, in the framework of the new external and internal reality, the insurgency began to consider the impossibility of the military triumph and to obtain some negotiated results, while the State in process of democratization, at the same time, initiated the consideration of a political solution instead of the military to the long conflict". (IRIPAZ, 1996: 3)

Before Guatemala, already the Nicaragua and El Salvador Governments had advanced in the signing of a peace agreement to put an end to the war in their respective countries. The elections in Nicaragua in 1990 where Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro succeeded and her organization Union Nacional Opositora (UNO) and her victory was respected by the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) gave another direction to the Nicaraguan conflict but reaffirming once more that the causes of the situation were internal and not originated by the confrontation East-West. In the case of El Salvador, only after the great military and political offensive of the FMLN, on November 1989, that arrived to the capital of the country, the city of San Salvador, the ARENA government with his President Al-

[107] The Grupo de Contadora was constituted by México, Colombia, Venezuela and Panamá, and to which subsequently Perú, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay joined in order to create the so called "Grupo de los 8." It was the first serious proposal for trying to solve the existing military conflict in the region by means of dialogue and negotiation.

[108] Esquipulas —so called by the name of a Guatemala town where the presidents had a reunion— achieved a greater international recognition than the Grupo de Contadora; the integration of the governments in the "Grupo de los 8" achieved besides to attract representatives of the United Nations (UN) and of the Organization of American States (OAS).

fredo Cristiani could accept a dialogue and a real negotiation; this process of approach carried to the agreements that put an end to the war; the peace agreement was accepted in presence of the General Secretary of the UN the last day of 1991 and was signed in a public place with multiple international representatives on January, 1992, in México City.

In Guatemala, there was a process of 11 signed agreements before arriving at the final one on December, 1996. It was about not only a cessation of fire among the military forces but about the formulation of a new social contract focused to a real development with greater social justice.

With more than 2,000 guests for the signing of the peace agreement on December, 1996, they were diverse leaders or ministers of State and Latin American presidents (Colombia, Venezuela, United States, Central America, México, Norway). Next to the URNG commanders was the president of Guatemala, Álvaro Arzú, and the representatives of the Governmental Commission for Peace (COPAZ): Gustavo Porras, Raquel Zelaya, Richard Aithenhead Castillo and the General Otto Pérez Molina. As a special figure was the Secretary General of the UN, Boutros Ghali.

With this final signing of peace between the URNG and the government, a period of military conflict came to an end and a new one started for restructuring the country at all levels. It exists, with this, a fundamental advance for Guatemala and all the Latinamerican countries: the political agreement is rather preferable through dialogue and negotiation that any type of war, or, as told it Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the Nobel Peace prize, the great challenge of reconciliation is that the dialogue could become the unique way to solve the differences in Guatemala.

Nevertheless, the conversion of the old guerrillas organizations in Guatemala in political organizations capable to compete in the electoral processes has not been achieved in an efficient way; in this sense, they have failed to influence in the political world of electoral options. On December 1996 they said to have three thousand combatants and 1,500 collaborators and from there wanted to constitute a front of democratic forces to be presented as electoral alternative. But it has not happened in Guatemala. Certainly it happened in El Salvador, where the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), old guerrilla front, was a real option to reach the executive power in the electoral processes as it did in 2009; the same thing happens in Nicaragua, where the Frente Sandinista para la Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) lost the elections in 1990 but recovered again the presidency with popular support in 2006. On the contrary, in Guatemala,

for example, the URNG —allied with another political organization—, during the presidential elections in 2007, could only achieve the 2,14% of the national voting, with its candidate Miguel Angel Sandoval.

## Presidential Elections (2003-2007)

There is no doubt that a generalized transition in Latin America since the epoch of the military governments toward the chosen civil governments has existed showing the voting of the citizens. With greater or smaller difficulties in each country, it has arrived at the conviction that the political way is the only one that should define the rulers in each country and not the *coup d'etat*s. To this, the declarative positions of the American governments at the end of the 20th century have helped, praising the democratic models in comparison with previous phases where openly they supported governments as that of Somoza in Nicaragua, that of Stroessner in Paraguay, that of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, that of the Duvalier family in Haiti, etc.

In Central America, in spite of the low profile of numerous political parties, of numerous democratic institutions that do not have just functioned solidly and of various cases of marked abstentionism, we must indicate the advance in the consensus about the political way for the election of authorities. "The electoral processes carried out up to now have been vouched by impartial observers, though indicating the need to improve some procedures of inscription of the potential voters, the need to expand the number of booths to facilitate the emission of votes and to perfect the mechanisms of count, so that the citizenship have truthful information on the results in the smaller possible time. There is no doubt, then, that in the last twenty years it has advanced along the way of democratic institutionality". (Rojas M., 2006)

The main problem of the political processes is found in the broken promises of the governmental leaders that they have not been able (or did not want) to improve the standard of living of the population. In the case of Central America, the figures do not improve but they are aggravated, with certain exception of the Costa Rican case. In El Salvador, the poverty touches the 48,9% of the population in 2001; in Nicaragua the 69,3% in 2001; in Guatemala the 60,2% in 2002, and in Honduras the 77,3% in 2002 (CEPAL, 2004). We can say that the reasons that caused the war in Central America —the nonconformity with the economic exploitation— they have not disappeared, but the consensus on the search of solutions with a political fighting seems to be consolidated.

Guatemala clearly lived a political transition from the epoch of militarism to the civil governments on January 14, 1986, when Vinicio Cerezo was chosen as president, but the economic situation has changed little with the following civil presidents: Jorge Serrano was chosen in 1991 but wanted to carry out a coup d'état and because of it he was deposed; Ramiro de León Carpio continued in 1993 and governed until 1996, when the presidency of Álvaro Arzú began, the one that signed the peace agreements with the insurgency; in 2000, Alfonso Portillo won the presidency, defeating Oscar Berger, who would win the elections for the executive power in 2003… Without the soldiers in the presidency, the levels of poverty, the political corruption and an enough generalizad environment of delinquency and violence, have persisted.

The presidential elections of 2003 expressed the continuity of the same economic and political elites of the previous governments through the victory of Oscar Berger.

The dispute for presidency in 2003 was decided in a second electoral round between the candidate that turned out to be victorious Oscar Berger and the candidate Álvaro Colóm, who was then for second time competing for the executive power. If we apply the tradicional political categories of "right" and "left", Berger, as a textile bussinesman with conservative ideas, was in the first one, and Colom in the second, but both of them were "moderated" since, during the first electoral round, the exdictador Efraín Rios Montt was also a candidate by the extreme right-winger Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG), and Rodrigo Asturias[109] representing the old guerrilla organization of the URNG.

In the second electoral round on December 28, 2003, the Supreme Electoral Court of Guatemala offered the victory to Oscar Berger, representing the organization Gran Alianza Nacional (GANA) with the 54% of the votes, while the Union Nacional por la Esperanza (UNE), of Álvaro Colom, had only arrived at 45,84% of the voting.

The Berger government initiated on January 14, 2004 and adoptting managerial style that could not resolve the problems of the country. The corruption, the deepening of the social inequality and the clash of all the political actors was the constant during his government, without remembering about the peace agreements signed in 1996. On the one hand, "they are routinary violent robberies in buses of the urban transportation and at the outskirts and the out-on-the-street robberies. The abductions asking for rewards and

[109] Rodrigo Asturias had been a militant in the insurgent movement and he was the son of Miguel Ángel Asturias, Literature Nobel prize in 1967.

the robberies to the banking system remain with stable tendency. The drug trafficking has registered a recovery" (Martínez A. C., 2005). According to the presidential report to the congress in 2004, during that year there were 1.340 homicides, 25 abductions, 3.534 robberies and 5.261 thefts of vehicles. According to the same author Martínez, it is at the level of corruption where the Berger government had its best results. On the other hand, the image with what the executive explicitly wanted to be presented as a road for development was that of "a government of businessmen for the businessmen"; this was declared not only by those who were the main governmental officials but by the practical activities the government made in favor of the businesses people, in the middle of deepening of social inequality.

In 2007, Guatemala was a country with a population of 12,3 million inhabitants, with the 67% of native population, and in a socioeconomic context of poverty and social inequality where the civil governments had no success.

The general basic information on the country that the World Bank offers us is the following one:

**Guatemala**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 12,31 millions |
| Income per capita | 1.680 USA dollars |
| Life expectancy | 65 years |
| HDI rank | 108 |
| Adult Literacy | 69% |
| Infant Mortality | 40/1000 births |
| Maternity Mortality | 190/100K |
| Women Labor Force | 29% |
| Freedom of Press | 51 |
| Governance Percentile | 28/100 |
| Confidence Range | 17-37 |
| Capital | City of Guatemala |

*Source: World Bank, 2005. http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2005*

The new aspects incorporated for the analysis of the countries by some international institutions do not refer only to the economic level but also to other elements that already are considered indispensable in the new concept of development. One of them, for example, refers to the category of "Human Development Index: IDH" that has been adopted for the UN in its index on the world countries, where it is measured not only the people income but also the situation in health and the education. With this indicator, we can see, for example, that Guatemala is found in the lamentable place 108. With data of the National Institute of Statistics, is perceived also that the 51% of the 12 million Guatemalans live in poverty, affecting particularly the native population. To the poverty, one must also add the lamentable phenomenon of corruption, the organizad crime and violence in all its forms, particularly against women (603 women murdered in the 2006) and activists for human rights. Only during the first semester of 2007, 2.857 homicides were committed, mostly with firearms, according to official reports.

In this context, the presidential elections were prepared for 2007, where 16 parties contended seeking the executive power, 158 legislative seats and 332 mayors. But it was a process that occurred separated and in a parallel way with the perception of the social needs, especialy because the political parties in general in Guatemala have very small credibility. Nevertheless, the electoral preferences of the people interested on voting predicted a closed combat between two main candidates: the Unión Nacional por la Esperanza (UNE), with social democratic tendency, with his candidate Álvaro Colóm having, a month before the electoral date, the 22% of the vote intention; the UNE candidate for vice-presidency was Rafael Espada, a character linked to the Chamber of Industry of the country. On the other hand, the Partido Patriota (PP) with its candidate, retired General Otto Pérez Molina had a vote intention of 17,5%; the PP carried as the candidate to vice-presidency to Ricardo Castillo Sinibaldi, belonging to the Corporación Castillo Hermanos, that have the monopoly of beer, sweet beverages, bottled water and the Industrial Bank.

The context of violence in the country was expressed also in the electoral period with an average of 16 daily violent deaths. Already in February 2007, the scandalous murder of various Salvadorian representatives in Guatemalan territory had occurred, and then their murderers, inside a high security prison —showing the case as a state crime—, they were massacred to impede the discovery of their masterminds. The OAS experts expressed their worry about the insecurity environment and about the existing impunity in the country when during the 4 months of electoral campaign they

had been murdered especially more than 50 candidates, kin of candidates or activists inside the process (LADB, 2007: *NotiCen* 2007-08-30); the OAS itself said that the organized crime, in certain municipalities, was going to mark the electoral result.

**Guatemala 2007 First round**:
**Parties Candidate Votes Percentage**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partido Patriota | Otto Pérez | 771.813 | 23,54% |
| UNE | Álvaro Colóm | 926.236 | 28,25% |
| GANA | Alejandro Giammatiel | 565.017 | 17,23% |
| FRG | Luis Rabbé | 239.204 | 7,30% |
| PU | Gritz García | 95.280 | 2,91% |
| UCN | Mario Estrada | 103.695 | 3,16% |
| URNG-MAIZ | Miguel Ángel Sandoval | 70.208 | 2,14% |
| ANN | Pablo Monsanto | 19.640 | 0,60% |
| PAN | Francisco Arredondo | 83.369 | 2,54% |
| DCG | Marco Cerezo | 16.461 | 0,50% |
| EG | Rigoberta Menchú | 100.365 | 3,06% |
| DIA | Héctor Rosales | 18.395 | 0,56% |
| CASA | Eduardo Suger | 244.373 | 7,45% |
| UD | Manuel Conde | 24.893 | 0,76% |

*Source: Oficial results (Tribunal superior Electoral de Guatemala): www.tse.org.gt*

**Guatemala**:
**Results of the second electoral round**: **4 November 2007**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Álvaro Colóm Caballero (UNE) | 1.449.533 | 52,81% |
| Otto Pérez Molina (PP) | 1.295.108 | 47,19% |

*Source: Oficial results (Tribunal superior Electoral de Guatemala): www.tse.org.gt*

The figures of the first electoral round in Guatemala give us a sample of the polarization of the voters around two positions on the problems of the nation: the Colóm party emphasized in the fight against poverty and delinquency the preventive measures of social policy, and the Patriotic Party of the retired General proposed the solution of the hard hand of the police and the army in order to fight delinquency and put order in the country. The first position won certainly, but the force of the Patriotic Party with its 23,5% of voting in the first round and the 47,1% in the second is not contemptible.

During the second electoral round, Álvaro Colóm won clearly on November 4, 2007 and defeated Otto Pérez, and subsequently took possession as the president of the country, on January 15, 2008, in the City of Guatemala, indicated the following: "it is Guatemala's turn, for the first time in 50 years, a change toward a social democratic government". If the program of Colom government complies although in a minimum percentage, we can affirm that the transition to democracy did not occur in Guatemala with the government of Vinicio Cerezo in 1985 but with Colóm in 2008. If Luis Cardoza y Aragon had mentioned the years 1945 to 1954 in Guatemala as the "ten years of spring in the country of eternal tyranny",[110] something may be changing in the Guatemalan history when through electoral processes it has been possible again that a moderate left arrives at the executive power in the government. The results of the Colom government facing the enormous complexity of the national problems were not good; after his term in government, the next president in 2011 was Otto Pérez Molina.

## The Rigoberta Menchú Candidacy

Analizing the results of these presidential elections in Guatemala, it is also necessary to undertake the participation of Rigoberta Menchú, who had been Nobel Peace prize in 1992, and who, being indian and in a nation with majority of natives, achieved an unexpected negative result of barely a 3,06% of the votes. How a Mayan woman, defender of natives in a national and international level, in a context where the own natives suffered

[110] In numerous texts of Guatemalan literature is quoted this famous phrase of Luis Cardoza y Aragón. Here we take the words from the August Monterroso speech, when he received the doctorate *Honoris Causa* at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala. (*La Jornada* Semanal, July 21, 1996)

the worst part of the repressive action of the last military governments,[111] could not obtain a sympathy generalized on the part of the Guatemalan voters? A similar question formulated the Jesuit Ricardo Falla: "The Prize Nobel of Peace 1992, that awoke so much illusion between the native towns of the continent and among many other native towns, even those from the scandinavian countries, how is she having so little echo in her political proposal?". (Falla, 2007)

Rigoberta Menchú was born in a native village and since she was little she had the experience of poverty, violence, discrimination and racism in which the Guatemalan history is wrapped. This situation along with the loss of her most close relatives by the same repression circumstances, pushed her to be involved in the social movements defending and demanding the rights of the Indian towns. In an autobiographical book[112] written by Elisabeth Burgos in 1982-82, she related extensively the details of her personal process of transformation in a woman compromised with the social fights. By her participation in the social movements in Guatemala, she was exiled in Mexico from 1981 to 1987.

In 1982, she began to have an active participation inside the UN, first through the Commission of Human Rights and, subsequently, in the General Assembly; she has come be an Ambassador of Good Will of the UNESCO, during the government of Oscar Berger. She has won an international reputation[113] with all the recognitions received; she has a position of notoriety, which she tried to utilize for her causes through Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation.

Her explicit incursion in Guatemalan politics was given in February 2007 when she presented her political movement, the Winaq, in alliance with the agency Encuentro por Guatemala (EG), directed by the activist of human rights Nineth Montenegro. Through this movement, she was seeking to make

[111] In the official reports about historic recount on the period 1954-85, it is said that from the 150.000 victims left during diverse decades of military dictatorships, 83% were indians.

[112] The book "Me llamo Rigoberta Menchu y asi me nació la conciencia" was published in Mxico by the editorial Siglo XXI. The book is written by E. Burgos quoting numerous conversations with Rigoberta. Although then it was disputed by the possible lack of authenticity of some historic details described, nobody can deny the process by means of which her figure came to public life.

[113] Among others recognitions, Rigoberta Menchú was the Nobel Peace prize in 1992; received an honorary doctorate in liberal arts at De Paul University in Chicago; the medal of the Legion of Honor in France; an honorary doctorate by the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, Canada; an honorary doctorate by the University of San Carlos de Guatemala.

effective the constitutional right of the natives to be voted into office. Formally, it was the EG who presented her as presidential candidate for the country, although diverse native organizations decided not to support this aspiration of Rigoberta because they felt not represented in the EG project.

The electoral result for Rigoberta Menchu Tum and the party Encuentro por Guatemala (EG) was disappointing. The surprise has been more stunning in the international environment but in the internal conditions of Guatemala the result was quite foreseeable through the vote intentions. On the one hand, her incursion in the electoral politics was very late, when the other candidates already carried an important advantage. In spite of her international fame, Rigoberta never before had been a figure in the national politics; her image more well appeared like an instrument of the EG to attract votes from the indians.

On the other hand, one must keep in mind that in the Latin-American history, with the indian name it is common to speak of the born inhabitants in the continent before arrivint the Spaniards, but the word takes away the specifications of each one of the ethnic groups. In Guatemala, though the indian word, you can speak in general about the majority of the population, but it is impossible to speak about an unique indian conception in spite of their extensive Mayan origin. In Guatemala, particularly, there are 24 Indian towns. Rigoberto Queme, former mayor of Quetzaltenango said: "It is a very racist fallacy to say that the candidacy of an indian has to agglutinate all the native towns". Another element in the analisis is the fact that among the Mayan communities, the Guatemalan electoral processes historically has been very discredited because they always have been instrument of leaders and corrupt overlords; when Menchú enters in the electoral politics, her image was deteriorated in extensive sectors, upon appearing as a sold out to the dominant system. Numerous indian groups discredited the Rigoberta campaign upon considering it very alien to the interests of the communities, to such extent that the III Continental Summit of Towns and Indian Nationalities, on March 2007, decided not to support the EG campaign, when they did not see themselves identified with its leaders and plan for government.

Menchu Tum also lost a lot of credibility upon being associated with the rich Mexican businessman Víctor González Torres (known as Doctor Simi in México) and to allow the entrance of Pharmacies "Similar" to the Guatemalan market; her alliance with the high political-economic spheres distanced her more from those she was pretending to fight for. It was not the Menchú figure what carried her to the rout; it was the way in which her

figure appeared in the Guatemalan politics, upon not been able to remain independent from the traditional political and economic groups; Rigoberta did not take the sufficient time to create herself an image in the national political life, thinking only in her international reputation. In her electoral adventure, besides, the election of the candidate to the vice-presidency was also unfortunate as a symbol: her companion during the electoral campaign was Fernando Montenegro, a businessman that was president of CACIF, organization that represents a not very popular business and wealthy elite.

Quoting again Ricardo Falla, we can say that her candidacy little by little was disappointing those who have trusted her: "This disillusionment has several explanations and reasons. The first and main one is that Rigoberta does not have by her side a mass organization, a social movement, as surely Evo Morales has in Bolivia. She has neither a partisan structure that cover the many regions of the country, neither much less the whole country. Her main strength, her international dimension, her international presence, her international work is, in Guatemala, her main weakness. The Menchu Foundation is only a NGO and, therefore, is only a small group of people located in the capital city. This shows that the only adhesive of the ethnic identity does not function if does not exist a hiss, a hemp, a thread that structures and coordinates that identity, and specially that moves it. The indian identity, being from the wind, is very powerful, but needs that tangible, concrete, and visible thread, that manage to arrive to the indian settlements. A second reason is that Rigoberta is seen by the indian people —according to what I have heard— as a person that already distanced herself from her own people. She received the Nobel Prize and she did not distribute it —that's what they say—, but invested it in the pharmacy business. They also say that she is distant, that no longer wants to speak with the poor, that does not go to Chimel, her village, that she already forgot about the suffering of her people". (Falla, 2007)

With all these errors, the candidacy of Menchú seems to have been a mistake. Nevertheless, we need to see forward in a long time the symbolic power of a first step that has already been given, in spite of its stunted electoral result: Rigoberta was the only woman —and besides, indian— among the 14 presidential candidates, something never seen in the history of Guatemala. It is the validity of this process seen by Manfredo Marroquín, director of the Central American Institute of Political Studies: "Although in terms of vote the achievements can be modest, her candidacy is important like a sign of opening in a political system traditionally dominated by the *criollos*". Menchú does not resemble Evo Morales in Bolivia, but her suc-

cesses and errors are acceptable in the difficult road of establishment and consolidation of democracy.

## Two Imaginary: Hard Hand *vs* Supportive Hand

What is Guatemala at present? Daniel Wilkinson, director of Americas Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW), for example, says: "Guatemala is found at present in a terrible situation, where there is extreme poverty, decadent institutions and some merciless mafias that have grown virtually without control for more than a decade" (LADB, *NotiCen*, 8 nov 2007)

In the case of Guatemala, although its level of poverty and inequality is considerable inside the Latinamerican region, what stands out, according to the majority of analysts, is the level of violence, organized delinquency and drug trafficking inside the country. With more than 6 thousand murders in 2006, Guatemala has one of the biggest rates of homicides in the world. And because of it, those interested in the electoral combat were looking at the positions of the candidates relating to this enormous problem: "Colom and Pérez represented completely different visions to try to solve the problem" (LADB, *NotiCen* 13 sept 2007). The Patriotic Party centered its campaign in the proposal to introduce the death penalty, in the increment of 50% in the size of the force of police, and in the statement of the emergency state to introduce the action of the army; the UNE, on the contrary, promised preventive measures in order to diminish poverty, the battle against the evident corruption of the security forces and the tolerance among the diverse social groups to go to the root of the problems.

The personality of the retired General Otto was particularly significant in the electoral campaign: although he was part of the governmental team that negotiated peace with the guerrilla warfare, he was also a *kaibil,*[114] one of the elite soldiers that was distinguished for his brutality in the repression of population; he was accused of numerous atrocities during the years of war against the guerrilla, especially when he was directing troops in the Department of El Quiché in the 80's, a scenario of numerous indian massacres. Pérez was also part of Presidencial guards, famous also by their brutality in

[114] The institution for forming and training soldiers in Guatemala, by instruction of the Department of Defense, changed its name, on March 5, 1975, by that of Kaibil school. They wanted to recall Kaibil Balam, king of the Mayan empire that was pursued but never captured by the Spaniards. The kaibiles in Gautemala became in real life protectors of the landowners and pursuers of any person or group who belong or simpathized with the insurgency.

the years 90's, and even implicated publicly in the murder of the Bishop Juan José Gerardi Conedera (LADB, *NotiCen*: 14 jun 2001), that had been coordinator of the Office of Human Rights[115] of the Archbishopric in Guatemala. In his conception, there is not place for tolerance because the problem has arrived at such level that there is no more than force to solve it: jail and death penalty for all the villains. This was in fact an electoral strategy that in previous years permitted the dictator Riios Montt to have a high degree of popularity, even carrying out out-of-court executions. Of this tradition comes the motto of the exgeneral Pérez: "Hard hand, head and heart".

Certainly the exgeneral lost the presidency in 2007 but nobody can deny the high number of votes obtained. In this sense, although his right positions related him directly to the powerful groups in the economy, his ideology had also great impact in the middle class and diverse sectors of the population. A businessman of Antigua Guatemala, Eduardo Pérez, supporting the Patriotic Party, said the following thing: "Here in Guatemala, when one leaves his house, only God knows if he will be able to return alive. The general is going to bring us security" (LADB, *NotiCen* 13 sept 2007). Because of it, in the social imaginary of many Guatemalans, the violence has arrived at such level that only this soldier will have the force to put the right order.

The proposal of Álvaro Colóm slid in an alternative way that was the one that finally prevailed in the second electoral round in the people's feelings and that was expressed in the motto "supportive hand". The 36 years period of militarism and repression also they weigh in the social imaginary and therefore the hard hand also was represented like a certain return to the past. And the fact is that the repression historically encouraged the insurgency and with it an armed confrontation in which all people have lost. Because of it, the Colom proposal about tolerance also did notch among the voters. Colom had had an experience in the search of conciliation, when he was head of the National Fund for Peace, during the government of Álvaro Arzú, who continued having an important political function in the direction of the municipality of Guatemala. Colom would name subsequently his victory as saying "NO to the tragic history of Guatemala", recalling the more than 250 thousand victims of the dirty war.

[115] This Office interviewed thousands of survivors of the internal conflict of 36 years in Guatemala, and with it the Church reported that the great majority of the abuses had been assignments by the Guatemalan army and its paramilitary allies. The bishop Gerardi made public this report on April 24, 1998 and two days later he was murdered brutally in his house. In June 2001, three members of military intelligence services were condemned by this crime.

The other element in the historic origin of the armed conflict in Guatemala is also represented by poverty, when we see that wealth does exist in the country but it is very badly distributed. Because of it, when Pérez Molina did not speak much about this social problem while Colom referred continuously to it, it had also a good impact in the electorate. The discussion about the causes of poverty can be quite an abstract theme, but in Central America the discussion about the free commerce treaty (Central America Free Trade Agreement: CAFTA) with the United States arrived openly. Here a criticism was shown about the capitalism as a social system where a few people take great advantage at the cost of the others. The words of Colóm came to be embodied in the minds of the population, beyond the feeling about insecurity: "Capitalism is good to create wealth but evil to distribute it… The capitalists and the middle-class are slaves of their wealth, and the poor are slaves of their poverty" (LADB, *NotiCen*: 13 sept 2007). More than the hard hand, then, what prevailed was the option for social programs that should attend the causes of poverty, of crime and delinquency.

It is interesting, in this sense, the perception of César Verduga, one of the advisors of the UNE candidate: "A difficult decision was done upon remaining in a more reflexive speech than emotional in the matter of insecurity"… It was shown clearly in the second electoral round that the people had the capacity of understanding that the hard hand, that is an emotional call, resolves no problem. The other speech of supportive hand gives more importance of job creation and also focuses on the strengthening of the police force and the judicial system in order to fight the insecurity. It is a more complex speech. It does not have as much fascination as the first one but at the end it turned out to be more sincere and more profitable". (LADB, *NotiCen*: 8 nov 2008)

Unfortunately —also one must say it—, it was a minority the one that decided the electoral victory, since Colom was chosen only by the 18% of the 5,9 million voters. Also one must recall that, although Colom won 20 of the 22 departments, lost in the city of Guatemala and its outskirts: the support came from the rural area while the urban population preferred the exgeneral.

The vote results impacted Pérez Molina himself, because he was sure about the vicotry having seen the surveys that were offered to him before the presidential elections.[116] And the fact is that for the history of Guatemala

[116] Prensa Libre offered to Pérez on October 31, 2007 an advantage of 52,3% on 47% of Colom; the Mexican enterprise BGC Ulysses Beltran y Asociados gave him the same day an advantage of 53% on 48%. Demoscopía, a Costa Rican enterprise, gave him 52,6% and 47,4% to Colom, on November 2, 2007.

is somewhat surprising that an electorate that has always favored the right ideologies and even the profile of dictators have been able, on November 4, 2007, opt for the UNE, a party of social democratic ideology, a party that prefer the capitalism model but incorporating important reforms about the wealth distribution. In a historic perspective, one must do reference to the government of Árbenz (1951-1954), that had tried a series of reforms in welfare for the population and that was deposed by the local oligarchy and the American government. In fact, with these 2007 elections, a renaissance of democracy in Guatemala has being shown after the period of 32 years (1954-1986) of militarism and dictatorships that had flowed into civil governments but not to a government with proposal of deep reforms as the actual Colom government.

## Final Considerations

The new president took possession on January 15, 2008 and affirmed emphatically that for the first time in 40 years there will be a government for the service of the poor. It will have certainly a task of titans: to provoke a growing in the economy, to consolidate the infrastructure of the country, to fortify the state institutions, particularly the referring to justice, health and education, and to redistribute the national wealth. With his ideology of social democracy, the president will have to be submitted in practice to a greater alliance with the Allianza Bolivariana de las Ameritas (ALBA) —one must note that they have been present in his first day at the persidential office Hugo Chávez and Daniel Ortega and he was invited to enter to Petrocaribe— or to the pressure that can exercise the United States government through its Latin-American models as Mexico and Colombia, because in fact Guatemala is now in the CAFTA.

To implement his project, Colom has the executive power, but not the legislature, since UNE has only 48 legislators from the 158 total in the congress; besides, he does not control neither the capital of Guatemala, whose municipal president Alvaro Arzú, who was a president of the country (1996-2000), has been re-elected by the Unionist party for the period 2008-2012.

The political change in Guatemala —Colom recognized it when he took the presidencial office—, has been a miracle. It will be more miraculous if he comes to comply the fundamental promises of his campaign. After 4 years as president, he did not.

## 7.2. ARGENTINA: the Continuity of a Political Project (Nestor-Cristina)

Upon speaking about Argentina during the years of dictatorship, it immediately comes to mind the *Recuerdo de muerte* (Memory of death) written by Miguel Bonasso. Almost every Latin America suffered military dictatorships, but each country has its private history that has to be aforesaid multiple times and in many ways so that it could remain in memory something that never should happen again. The successive military governments until the end of the 70s were inspired in the doctrine of the national security and they imposed a terrorism of state (cfr. Tapia V., 1980); with this terrible experience, it can be spoken positively about a democracy transition, at least in the sense that we have now an institutionalized way to go from any government to another using the electoral processes.

Certainly we can see the time when the authoritarianism was in almost every Latin American country, especially in the 60's: "The armies oust preventively those governments considered weak with regard to the communism or too tepid in their solidarity with the United States" (Rouquié, 1989: 220). Nevertheless, the Latin American militarism of the 60's and 70's is very different in each national context; yes, there was the tendency of the military to displace the civilians from the government leadership but there was also in the 80's another tendency almost obliged —supported even ideologically by the United States— so that civilians could return again to the governmental elites under the population vote; the militarism in each time and in each country has its particular characteristics and therefore we should offer this Argentine's historic context in order to understand its contemporary political processes.

### Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy

On July 1, 1974, Juan Domingo Perón died after having returned from exile. He had returned to Argentina in a triumphant way, in 1972, but he was already 77 years old and obtained a clear electoral victory on March 1973, that put him again in the presidency; although, the situation had changed notably relating to the Peronism's first epoch. "The society recognized in him the cunning, the authentic passion to the task. The different classes, parties and leaders placed in his charismatic person the resolution of different interests, some of them irreconcilable" (Corbière, 1983). The government was centered in his person and, with his death, the Peronism wanted

to maintain the illusion through his last wife, already widowed, Maria Estela Martinez de Perón, "*Isabelita*". She was the first woman managing the government but neither did it go successful for her through elections nor did that period had her personal seal because in real life it was a military group the one that marked the government decisions. It was the second important period of the Peronists in power; the first one had been between 1946 and 1955 with General Perón when he was young and was married with Eva. The new Peronist moment 1973-1976 was a lot shorter because it could no longer be maintained to diffuse national-popular ideology set against an enemy recognized as the oligarchy composed by agrarian bourgeoisie of landowners and agrarian exporters. On the other hand, the country was deep in a sharp economic crisis that was unsustainable: on March 1976, the prices had risen 566,3% and the tendency seemed to continue. The stabilization measures implemented by the minister of Economy, Celestino Rodriguez, did not go well and the situation worsened.

In that context, the Commander-in-Chief, Jorge Rafaél Videla, sent a message to the nation, with a veiled threat in which he announced that the government "should be purified from immorality and corruption […] from the political, economic and ideological speculation" or, if this did not happen, they would be displaced (Novaro and Palermo, 2003: 18). On March 24, 1976, the military left the formalities and they put an end to the former governmental power in Argentina. Quickly, they diffused the objectives of the National Reorganization Process: to re-establish order, to reorganize the institutions and to create the conditions for an authentic democracy. They sought to stand out the Christian values, to rescue the Argentinian identity, to fight against the communist threat. It was, they said, a time to build a new order that, once achieved, they would deliver the power to civilians. But the prevailing conception was the Doctrine of National Security: "It is not a doctrine about war but a doctrine about the government, that identifies the State and armed forces as conforming a single institution. From its structure, organization and hierarchies, the army defines itself as representative of the permanent interests of the nation whose protection is responsibility of a military state". (Tapia V., 1980: 166)

When *Isabelita* was ousted, the military dictatorship exercised repression; they had just gotten to power when they identified all those who were potentially opposing; it began the list of disappeared persons, victims of the State terrorism. The fear came in such a way that the State censorship was not necessary; a self-censorship occurred in which the fear to be person

under arrest was greater than the desire and need to speak loudly. The disappeared persons and many people going into exile were a characteristic of those years: between 1975 and 1980, some analysts think that about 40,000 people went into exile.

Pursuing the opposed ideas to government is a common characteristic in the military dictatorships, and the Argentine's case was not the exception. The subversives groups and guerrillas, particularly the urban guerrillas, the *Montoneros*, were defeated quickly, with a war against the insurgents that achieved its mission killing the opponents. Eventualy, during the 1978 World Cup in Argentina, some protest voices could be listened asking the victory for Argentina as champion, but asking also for Videla's execution.

Some people in Argentina had supported the military with the *coup d'etat* using the argument that, in fact, it was necessary to establish a new order to save politics and domestic economy. The critical environment in the economy and in the social problems at the national level made many people think that the society needed the hard hand of the soldiers in order to put a new order and to resume the progress. A part of the Argentine society considered the military as the last guarantee of unity and order of the nation. (Novaro and Palermo, 2003: 31)

But that feeling of national unity under the protection of the military was falling down little by little with the inefficiency of the governing Juntas to improve the economic situation, also adding the climate of repression: In 1984, a report of the National Commission on Disappearance of People (CONADEP: *Comision Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas)* spoke about 10.000 individuals in condition of disappeared-detained persons. The perception on the situation was varying in such way that the society itself that had supported the military blow began to demand a clarification of the repressive actions taken by the government and their consequences.

The military wanted to take advantage supporting events that could return the nationalist feeling and love to the soldiers. Such was the case of the 1978 World Cup that, in suspicious conditions, Argentina won. Nevertheless, it was not a similar result with the Falkland Islands War (Guerra de *Las Malvinas*), in 1982, where the military faced England and was shamefully defeated.

The dispute on the islands sovereignty was not new; nevertheless, England continued showing itself as the owner and the negotiations did not seem to advance. With this, General Galtieri embarked Argentina upon a mission that could only finish in defeat. And the rout in the Falkland Islands was the big point of rupture with the military dictatorship. When the

surviving soldiers returned from war to Argentina they were billeted so that it was not known what had really happened during the fights. The disputes began among the military elites; they could not maintain more their system and they were forced to call to elections earlier than expected planning them for 1983.

The military government had been incapable to stabilize the domestic Argentina economy. This objective about the economy stabilization had been based on the liberation of the markets, the privatization of industrial sectors, the elimination of unions, the indebtedness, in short, in the neoliberal politics favoring the large multinational businesses. In Argentina, it was the beginning for implementing the neoliberal model until its last consequences (Calcagno, 2002). The continuation of the economic crisis had been the cause why General Videla left his charge as head of the government in 1981 after five years in power, because he was deposed. The perception on the military was changing and people began to see in the political parties the new and maybe the most adequate instruments in order to negotiate with the military power the characteristics of the inevitable transition process.

When Videla was deposed, the military elected Roberto Eduardo Viola, and it was, exactly, during his period when the way toward transition was glimpsed for the first time. They began to present options for the transition with negotiations through the *Multipartidaria* an organization that included many political parties.

The *Multipartidaria* had been created in 1981 in order to pressure the military Junta so that they could abandon the governmental power. There were included many political parties with diverse ideologies: the *Unión Cívica Radical*, the *Partido Justicialista* (a Peronist organization), the *Intransigente*, the *Demócrata Cristiano* and the *Movimiento de Integración y Desarrollo*. Its first communiqué was "a pronouncement of democracy, for democracy", that demanded the return of the political parties to power.

Since the beginning, the *Multipartidaria* left practically in the military hands the transition process. The different factions of the *Multipartidaria* began to move their pieces searching the presidency; though the organization was conformed by many parties, the electoral combat was a main fight only between Peronism, represented by the *Partido Justicialista*, and a radicalism faction, headed by Alfonsin and his *Movimiento de Renovación y Cambio*.

Peronism —from the military government of Juan Domingo Perón and his wife "*Evita*" during the 50's— was born through the growth and organization of the working class; it was moved by a popular anti-colonialist movement

and revolutionary nationalism, giving rise to a reformist social paternalism. Unfortunately, the working organization went transforming itself into a trade unionism linked with the State and found its big crisis in the government that finished in the 1976 *coup d'etat*; nevertheless, it was the same military government at the end of the 70s that gave new possibilities to Peronism in order to assume power, upon converting it, inside the collective imaginary, in a representative force of the majorities. "Inside the popular classes, Peronism is the majority force, integrated especially by the hard-working class, the lower middle class, media sectors and some from the bourgeoisie. It is a typical popular party from many social classes in Latinamerica. It had three million affiliated, a great important figure if we considere the total Argentine population reaching 26 million inhabitants". (Corbière, 1983)

Months before the elections of 1983, the large doubts of the Peronism were around the critical topics to be resolved just then. They wanted to be capable of becoming a capable option in order to resolve the social and political stagnation in Argentina, to renew the institutions and to project the country national and internationally. (Corbière E., 1983)

On the other side, the radicalism represented the opposition to Peronism; it was the voice of the middle class and it was the one that prevailed in the government upon finishing the military dictatorship. It was "a typical party of the middle class (professional, univesity sectors, middle-class, merchants and not few oligarchic sectors)". (Corbière E., 1983)

The radicalist party had suffered strong divisions but, in 1983, the Radical Civic Union (UCR) presented different options but the most important was the Movement of Renewal and Change, presenting liberal and left tendencies. The tendency of Alfonsin appeared "as a democratic movement, seeking the people in general as possible electors […], openly Alfonsin's ideology appears as social democrat, but this in Argentine means absolutely nothing, because even the most reactionary sectors utilize this concept. In the economy, the Alfonsin orientation is linked to the neo-capitalist policy of economic development and politically is straightened toward the anti-peronism as electoral strategy, position that expresses his deep clash with the Peronist working base". (Corbière, E., 1983)

Raúl Alfonsín began to be well known during his participation in the *Multipartidaria* thanks to his fight to build a national new reestablishment inspired in the total and complete observance of the law, without any distinction. For this reason it always was priority for Alfonsin the judgement of militars, the clarification of the crimes and their authors; it was necessary to

make the law be worth over all those who had violated it.[117] The judgement processes of the soldiers had certain particularities, therefore it was sought that the soldiers themselves accepted their faults, so that they could accept to judge themselves. Alfonsin had four big objectives: the return to a democratic order, to avoid any new intent to establish *de facto* governments, to define the functions of the military inside the State[118] and, finally, to recover the fundamental role of the State meaning the service to society.

Finally the elections arrived on October 30, 1983, and Raúl Alfonsín defeated Peronism in the ballot boxes with the 52% of the votes (7.659.530); Luder, the representative of Peronism obtained only 40% (5.936.656). His first actions were "to revive the salaries, to apply the minimum wage and to finish with hunger and unemployment" (Novaro and Palermo, 2003: 539). On December 6, 1983, the military Junta signed its dissolution.

The government of Alfonsín would not be in reality a radical government but an inclusive conglomerate of radicals, intellectual, activists, democrats, anti-dictatorship groups, etc.

The military had failed with its so called "Process" in order to stabilize the economy; Alfonsín marked the objective of defeating inflation and the rehabilitation of mechanisms that accumulate wealth, but, at the moment of taking posesion as president, he had to face the national debt reaching $43,6 billion USD (Garcia Lupo, 1984). This big debt would become the main problem for the growth of the domestic economy during the Presidency of Alfonsín. He had to negotiate and accept the terms imposed by the IMF in order to be able to breake the inflation that, in those moments, came to 672%. The interests on the debt quickly ascended to unsustainable levels.

The situation was not simple and it was getting out government control, that undertook a program of structural readjustment according to the imposed prescriptions by the IMF; those programs did not pleased the population. In spite of the fight for human rights that characterized the Alfonsin speeches, a big part of the society felt betrayed when the laws

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[117] From the beginning, for the judgments to be placed, there were made distinctions in the responsability levels on the committed acts during the State terrorism. Therefore, the "doctrine of the three responsability levels" would be applied, doing distinction among those who had ordered those acts, those who had executed them (folowing orders) and those who, upon executing them, had exceeded the utilized methods.

[118] Military: an armed citizen member in a professional institution compromised with security, development and welfare of the nation, but conceived as one more sector completely subordinated to the governmental political power. (Ansaldi, 2007)

on *Obediencia Debida y Punto Final* were approved, offering amnesty to many soldiers. Alfonsin did not get what he had promised and, with it, he opened the way for Peronistas to arrive to the presidency; in 1989, the peronism recovered the power through Carlos Menem; another tragic episode in the history of Argentina began; every Argentinian was going to suffer the situation, particularly with the afterwards president Fernando de la Rua. Civilians had returned to the power through the electoral processes, but the country structurally was still the same.

## The 2001 Crisis

When the Peronistas lost the 1983 elections, the Partido Justicialista initiated a severe process of transofrmation: "The reformers dismantled the traditional mechanisms of Peronism like the participation of the union workers and they replaced the linkage of the party with the unions and the hard-working poor classes with close networks of friends… For the 90s, the PJ had been transformed from a party dominated by the unions in a partisan machine where the unions were only marginal actors" (Levitsky, 2003: 4). This was intended with the purpose to attract also votes from the middle class and from independent sectors, removing at the same time the image of a radical left. With only the electoral point of view, this resulted well with the victory of Carlos Menem in 1989. "These changes benefited the party in two ways. First they facilitated the access of the party to the growing electorate of the middle classes without being divorced completely of the hard-working low class. Second, after 1989, these reforms enlarged the governmental capacity of Menem to implement the reforms oriented to the market". (Levitsky, 2003: 11)

Peronista reformers managed to have a total control of the party in 1987 and they were fully enthusiast in the electoral campaign with professionals and the use of new technologies. With this, Carlos Menem won the presidency with 47% of the votes facing a declining UCR under the Alfonsín government. Subsequently, although the PJ lost the presidency in 1999, it remained a strong party in Argentina winning in that year 14 from the 23 regional governments.

The Presidency of Carlos Menem is the fundamental background for the terrible 2001 crisis. That had happened in México with the neoliberal reforms of Carlos Salinas that provoked the national 1994-95 crisis during the Ernesto Zedillo government; in a similar way, the Menem orthodox neoliberalism built the fundamental elements of the first biggest economic

Latin-American crisis of the 21st century. It is interesting the comparison of these two cases (México and Argentina) because their presidents —Salinas and Menem in their moments— where those who most prompted the so called neoliberal model with expressed alignment to the Washington politics. In both cases, after having achieved the stabilization of the macroeconomic indicators, they fell in a clangorous crisis. Carlos Menem was in power in the Argentine government during an entire decade, through a reelection, but the havoc of the economic model came to the following president Fernando de la Rua, in the same way as the Mexican crisis exploited in the first month of the government of Zedillo.

A lot has been written about the so called neoliberal model and its consequences in the structural readjustments that had to be done to pay the external debt, to control inflation and to diminish the State deficit through the decrease of the expense on social programs, the sale of public businesses, the cost for services to the people that were free before, etc. This model pretended to emphasize the new economic measures seeking only the production and productivity continuing the IMF prescriptions and trying to focus on the opening of the markets and the elimination of the state subsidies contrasting the previous model conceived as a State intervention in the free enterprise. But the results have not been satisfactory. "In practice, the new model has been producing a tremendous change in the economic rules, relaxing specially the national protectionism benefiting the mobility of the agents of the large multinational corporations; there is no doubt that there had been carried out an extensive world program of privatization of public businesses and many social security programs with their benefits have been trimmed and they have been sacrificed for the sake of the national economic recovery; the deregulation of the labor market, especially, has produced also a stagnation of the salaries and the loss of union conquests". (Medina and Delgado, 2003: 54-55)

We cannot affirme that always there are mechanical consequences after a crisis, but in these two cases, inside the new democratizing phase in Latin America, the populations have wanted to seek new emerging leaders after the economic failures. Because of it, we can indicate that the neoliberal model is seriously questioned not only in the academic level but even in the general opinion of the people and we can find this in the ballot boxes. "In general, the Latin-Americans have learned to channel their frustration toward an electoral protest behavior: abstention, emergency of candidates out of the norms, alternations… The alternations and the emergency of outsid-

ers translate the will of the voters to punish the governments and political parties in a specific moment…The left, tied constantly to the social movements, has been benefited with this humor of protest of the voters" (Badit et Didiot, 2006: 251). We can recognize then in Latin America that we are in a period where the votes really can begin to count in politics; where there is a plurality of options, the alternation in power is real. We are living then in a situation that was not possible to live in Latin America decades before.

In the case of Argentina with Menem, watching the survey carried out in 1997 by Steven Levistsky (2003: 29) among union leaders, the 8,1% were declared as neoliberal and they continued supporting the neoliberal reforms; 21,6% were declared in favor of the reforms but they indicated that it was necessary to modify them after the crisis; there was a majority of 48,6% that criticized seriously the reforms and the Menem government although they saw it as somewhat necessary, and there was a 21,6% of open opponents saying that the economic reforms never must have be done. The political analysts coincide in indicating that the De la Rua victory itself was due to the generalized refusal to Carlos Menem and to the deterioration of the economic situation in the country.

If Peronism has always been identified with the poor, with the *descamisados* and it had come even to the middle classes and sectors of the bourgeoisie, the crisis struck them all and, with it, the Carlos Menem image also fell. The new government of Fernando de la Rua, postulated on August of 1997, by an organization made from the Alliance between the Radical Civic Union (UCR) and the *Frente para un Pais Solidario* (FREPASO), had earned the presidential elections on October 1999 with 40% of the votes and, because of that, it was clear that the Peronism had not disappeared. But more important it was the fact that the *Alianza para el Trabajo, la Justicia y la Educación* that made possible the triumph to De la Rua went cracking in two years of government; they had been united against Carlos Menem but during the exercise of the government the differences prevailed; they were confronted with all the unionized sectors and the businessmen did not take an active role to support the new government. Different from Carlos Menem who was an authoritarian and executive president, Fernando de la Rua forged the image of a weak president who searching consensus among many sectors, he remained bad with all of them; when he announced some governmental decisions, very few paid attention to him in the real life.

The Peronism, on the other hand, continued being the first force of the opposition and, with this, it contributed also to the growing uncontrol-

lable political situation of the country. It was given, for example, a symbolic confrontation when the Partido Justicialista named the peronist Eduardo Camaño as president of the House of Representatives and Ramón Puerta as provisional president of the senate. So and with the fact that there was no vice president (Carlos "Chacho" Álvarez, Vice President and leader of the FREPASO, had renounced to his post on October 2000), each time the President De la Rua —from the UCR— went away from the country, according to the law, his place would be occupied by a Peronista politician.

The international economic environment was neither favorable to Argentina due to the pressures of the creditors and to the imposition of prescriptions of the IMF. Being De la Rua each time with less political supports in his government and having been confiscated the bank deposits through the so called "Corralito[119]" by Domingo Cavallo a minister of Economy, the government had to face openly the sectors of the middle class that initiated the campaigns of the *cacerolazos* and other forms of protest. To the general economic crisis —with an Argentinian *peso* that no longer bore the equality established with the U.S. dollar, with an unemployment that had risen to 18% and a big drop of the international reserves— and to the institutional political crisis among the political forces, the out-on-the-streets demonstrations that culminated in the violent actions of the Plaza de Mayo followed on December 20th and 21st 2001, with a repression ordered by the government. With it, the De la Rua[120] renunciation as President was given, who left fleeing in helicopter from the House of government cutting a mandate that it was going to last until 2003. With his renunciation, Ramon Puerta assumed the presidency because he was the president of the Senate and, afterwards, on December 23, the Parliament named for the post Adolfo Rodríguez Saa, Governor of the Province of San Luis; but Rodríguez only lasted a week in his post because he renounced on December 30th. Ramón Puerta did not want to assume again the presidency and, because of it, Eduardo Camaño was the interim President of the House of Representatives, until the Parlia-

[119] With this word, it was known in Argentina the decree 1570/2001 published by the De la Rua government on December 3, 2001, in which the money withdraws in cash surpassing the Argentine 250 pesos a week were prohibited, and also the transfers toward outside of the country. The government intended, with this desperate order, that Argentina Banks could not became undercapitalized.

[120] Fernando de la Rua remained well marked in the Argentina imaginary: still in 2003, when he went to vote, some people insulted him and he had to be withdrawn by bodyguards in the middle of a turmoil. People shouted "traitor", and mentioned that a helicopter was waiting for him at the exit, in allusion to the form as he finished his presidency on December 20, 2001.

ment, on January 3rd, 2002, appointed Eduardo Duhalde as president, who along with Ramón Ortega had competed and has lost facing Fernando de la Rua and Carlos Álvarez in the elections on October 1999. The Peronism returned to the Argentina presidency. "In less than two weeks, Argentina had five presidents of the nation". (Moniz B, 2004: 525)

The last decade of the 20th century had represented for Argentina a period of social, institutional, and political re-organization after the military dictatorship. The Alfonsin period had finished with results very distant from those intended. The power returned to peronists with Carlos Menem at the head of government. With the fundamental prescriptions of the neoliberal model and especially with the Law of Convertibility, he sought to stabilize the economy and to fight the hyperinflation that had left the period of transition; the economic recovery and the stability were shown in the first years and it was an important factor for his reelection. In 1998, the Argentina economy seemed to have recovered a good index in the macroeconomic level: the GDP had reached 300.000 million dollars, same that placed Argentina among the first thirty economies of the world; the GDP per capita was one of the highest in Latin America.

But the system little by little became paralyzed in the middle of multiple accusations of governmental corruption; the Peronism lost the direction of the government while the economy continued being sunk until, in 2001, was prey by one of the greatest crisis of its history. The indicators were horrible: Argentina lost 12% of its GDP, the poverty came to the 60% of the population, and the Law of Convertibility[121] came itself down. The gravity of this crisis, added to the ineffectiveness of the radical government from the president De la Rua obliged the society to take the streets and to require the renunciation of the President. In few days, there existed some presidents until Duhalde came to power, but sunken the country at the bottom of the crisis.

The Mexican crisis (1994-95) and the Argentinian (2001-02) can be analyzed together because there is a great symbolism in both. Each one of the leaders have wanted to do their own analysis and taking points in order to claim their own positions: Salinas wanted to blame Ernesto Zedillo's government for the crisis; Menem attributed to De la Rua all the responsibility

[121] The Argentinian peso was devalued regarding the dollar: from 1 to 1, it became 4 to 1. "The essence of that evil model finished with the convertibility, Duhalde declared, considering exhausted the liberalism that had taken Argentina to Bankruptcy, to chaos; it made inevitable the devaluation". (Meniz B., 2004: 525)

of the 2001 fiasco. But both forgot that in any process there are deep causes of the crisis that were prepared during their corresponding governmental period. In this sense, keeping in mind the economic measures of the neoliberal model through the structural adjustment and their consequences for the population, our analysis emphasizes the meaning of the popular protest actions set against the crisis, translated also toward many forms of electoral political representation. The rise of the *Piqueteros*[122] movement in Argentina was an example of how the normal channels of institutional action of protest were closing. On the other hand, although in the electoral processes of the 80's and 90's there is an important level of abstentionism in Argentina (Cantón and Jorrat, 2003), it cannot be denied the clear punishment sense for those the population identifies as causes of the crisis and in some cases, they came to criticize all the prevailing politics. "The economic collapse of Argentina after 1998 was accompanied by a deep crisis of political representation. The crisis was clear on December 2001, when a massive civic rebellion against the political elite (in the framework of the extraordinary slogan that they should go all away — *¡que se vayan todos*!) provoked the fall of two presidents in an interim of 10 days". (Levitsky, 2003: 30)

Duhalde was the President until 2003, in the electoral situation where another Peronista, Nestor Kirchner, emerged in the political arena.

## 2003 Elections: Different aspects of Peronism

If the country had come at the bottom of the crisis on December 2001, it could not be expected more than a slow recovery. Having registered in Argentina in 2002 the most impressive drop of GDP in Latin America, the 12%, so much the government as the civil society of Argentina began a road uphill with some fundamental agreements.

President Duhalde had a two yeas ephemeral period; with some basic economic measures to settle the crisis, he was dedicated to prepare the 2003 elections, wanting to impede at any cost the Menem return. Nestor Kirchner[123] came from the Peronista groups, and was supported by the president

[122] Piqueteros was the name given to the movement of poor and unemployed people that blocked roads and highways requiring employment and protesting against the 2001 governmental economic politics: "The piqueteros was the most significant movement of the low classes that emerged outside from Peronism in a period of 60 years". (Levitsky, 2003: 31)

[123] Until then, Kirchner was not at the national politics level but in the regional context. He had been chosen as Mayor of Rio Gallegos, Capital of the Santa Cruz Province in 1987; four

in functions. In the first round of elections, Kirchner did not obtain the first place, but remained 2 percentage points under his main opponent, the also peronist and former president Carlos Menem. His campaign maintained a clear center-left line, rejecting the imposition of the free commerce treaty with the United States and the neoliberal politics (he accused Menem and Lopez Murphy as "thatcheristas"[124] and puppets of the banks and international corporations); he emphasized the search of a model of regional integration through the MERCOSUR and an explicit and total refusal to ALCA (the free commerce treaty with the USA). He had a clear position in favor of the human rights, and he pronounced himself for the continuity of the judgments of the soldiers responsible of State crimes.[125]

The Kirchner speech impacted the population. In the context of an injured nation, it revived the idea of the nationalism, moving away from the military authoritarianism (the national security doctrine); he moved away from the Menem pragmatism who had implemented so many structural reforms without anesthesia in the 90s, and he differentiated also himself from populism and utopian marxism that could have encourage the popular classes against the bourgeoisie. The project of Kirchner was generating consensus in different environments: "Toward the popular world, the Kirchner speech offered a nationalist rhetoric that included the politics of economic reactivation with timid gestures of distribution or of confrontation with those groups that concentrated wealth. Toward the middle and high classes, he offered them an image of efficient enterprising… The nation idea was transformed in the presidential speech into the horizon of a redeeming promise of common inclusion". (Carles and Seman, in Corten, 2006: 201)

In the elections on Sunday April 27, 2003, 80% of the Argentines responded by going to vote. The former president Carlos Menem during 1989-99 wanted to return to the executive power but he represented openly the elites of the right of the neoliberal model and a narrow alliance with the United States; but also inside the Peronism, the progressive Nestor Kirch-

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years later, he became the province governor , where he was re-elected twice, enjoying the fame as a good administrator. From there, he jumped to the presidential candidacy of the country, with Duhalde supporting him.

[124] This word was referring to the neliberal politics of Margaret Thatcher in England.

[125] Menem had offered indults to many soldiers. When Kirchner arrived to the Presidency, the Congress declared the nullity of the Law *Punto Final y Obediencia Debida*, reopening the judgments.

ner had arisen. Both were at the head of the electoral preferences without achieving the legal majority in the first round and, with this, it was presented the need of a second electoral round planned for May 18, 2003. A day after the first electoral date, Menem was located at first place with 24,3%; (1.345.696 votes) followed by Kirchner with 21,9 (1.209.030), according to the results of the 30,2% of the 66.747 electoral tables and with 22,3% of the scrutinized votes, on a total of 25,5 million voters. Behind the two main candidates, one of them with an orthodox neoliberal thought was located, Ricardo Lopez Murphy, obtained the 17,2% (949.273 votes) and later the populist peronist, Adolfo Rodriguez Saa with 14,2% (788.171). On the other hand, it was also a radical tendency with the social christian candidate Elisa Carrio with the 13,1% with 726.901 votes (Cfr. Newspaper Publico, 28-IV-2003). 80% of population had voted. At the end, the tendencies did not vary: "Menem received the 24,34% of the votes; Kirchner the 21,99%; Ricardo Lopez Murphy with his *Movimiento Federal para Recrear el Conocimiento* (RECREAR) was in third place with the 16,34%; Elisa Carrio from the *Afirmación para una Repulica de Iguales* (ARI) received the 14,15%, and Rodríguez Saa obtained the 14,12%". (LADB, *NotiSur*, May 2, 2003)

The bipartisanship was disappearing just as it was predicted for Argentina at the end of the military dictatorship. In fact, the electoral 2003 dispute was going to be for the second round between two peronists but with contrasting tendencies: the rightist Carlos Menem, 72 years old, with his declared neoliberal ideology, and Néstor Kirchner, with a central-left position, relatively stranger in the national environment, who presented certainly the hope for an economic recovery but specially for a social politics with better wealth distribution along with an integration project that approached him the new Latin-American left governments. In the period going from April to May 2003, Carlos Menem[126] did a fast analysis about the electoral preferences and, although he had remained two percentage points above Kirchner in the first round, he concluded with certainty that he was going to lose overwhelmingly in the second round. The forecast for Menem had enough fundament with a perception verified in a big part of the population: his

[126] Still in 2003 in the presidential candidacy, Carlos Menem had a big number of votes in his favor. In 2007 and 77 years old, Menem still wanted to contend trying to win the province government of La Rioja, his native land, but on August 19th, he recognized his defeat on the third place with only 22% of the voting (LADB, *NotiSur*, Aug. 31, 2007). Menem, a conservative Peronist, defender of the free market, faithful to the international financial agencies demands and unconditional allied of the United States, came practically to the end of his political career.

government periods, in spite of he elevated the Argentine's macroeconomic indicators, were characterized by terrible adjustment programs, the cutting of multiple social programs, accusations of corruption (the former president was in fact in home prison during some months in 2001); he also was a great supporter of the ALCA and his image was that of a man subordinated to the northamerican politics and to the international financial agencies, just as it was mentioned in one of the posters against his campaign: "Menem Government means Bush power". In this way, with this prospective,[127] he waited four days before the planned second electoral round (May 18, 2003) in order to announce that he would not be presented to the second elections and, with this, Néstor Kirchner was declared automatically by the Congress the president for the period 2003-2007: he took possession on May 25. But the Menem purpose had been *machiavellian*: on the one hand, his decision avoided himself the humiliation of an oppressing rout and, on another, he reduced legitimacy to the following government. Kirchner, although he had the forecast of an oppressing majority on the former president in the second round with more than 40 percentage points above, in reality, he only won the presidency having remained under Menem in the first round.

Nevertheless, the Kirchner government got his own legitimacy so much in the governmental exercise with a fast recovery of the domestic economy and with the reached political stability. During his 4 years period in the government, the highest level of annual economic growth was achieved (the 8%), the poverty levels lowered to 25%, and the unemployment came down to 9% (in the times of crisis it had arrived at 22%); relating to the internal needs of the country, he canceled the external debt payments to IMF and renegotiated them satisfactorily. In all this process, Kirchner managed to have a great support of the people. One must consider with attention the comparison between the terrible crisis situation in 2001-2002 and the Argentine recovery in just a few years. The World Bank data have placed again to this South American country in 2005 among the ones having high human development Index in Latin America.

[127] Two businesses pollsters, after the first electoral round, considered Kirchner clearly as the favorite. The OPSM gave Kirchner a 65,4% advantage on Menem who only reached the 12,8%; Equis gave Kirchner 59,2% and Menem the 24,1%. (LADB, *NotiSur*, May 2, 2003)

**Argentina 2005**:
**general data**

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 38,38 millions |
| Income per capita | 7.470 USA dollars |
| Life expectancy | 74 years |
| HDI rank | 34 |
| Adult Literacy | 97% |
| Infant Mortality | 18/1000 births |
| Maternity Mortality | 30/100K |
| Women Labor Force | 33% |
| Freedom of Press | 67 / 100 |
| Governance Percentile | 59 /100 |
| Confidence Range | 51-67 |

*Source: World Bank, 2005. http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2005*

In the context of a country with that 2001 crisis, with an impressive fall of their GDP —12 negative points during 2002, the most serious crisis in all the region with its consequence in the *tango* effect—, it is marvelous to observe all the ways of recovery implemented so much in the government level as also in the perspective of the civil organizations. During the Kirchner government, elected in 2003, they had the good experience of an economic recovery, with a growth average of 8% in the economy; in the political environment, he prompted with emphasis the MERCOSUR, the UNASUR, the ALBA, and he was opposed openly to the ALCA, specially during the Summit of the Americas carried out in Mar del Plata in 2005. Nevertheless, in the environment of electoral preferences he had an accident upon losing his candidate for the city of Buenos Aires: in the last year of his government, the capital city was won by Mauricio Macri, a right businessman. Any way, the general voting in 2007 in favor of Cristina Fernandez would show with clarity the general support to his political project.

## Cristina Fernández de Kirchner: a Governmental Project That Remains

At the end of the 2003-2007 period, the *Frente para la Victoria* (the organization in which Néstor Kirchner had won the presidency in 2003) presented, as its presidential candidate, Senator Cristina Fernández. She represented, just as she said later in the speech when she took the presidential position, the continuity of a left project that already had been giving results to Argentina. It was a project of national reconstruction, with alternate measures to the Carlos Menem neoliberalism, that intends to go through an economy diversified and that was maintained far from the loans of the traditional international banking institutions, "eliminating the irresponsible indebtedness politics";[128] and she had declared herself in favor of continuing the judgments against the soldiers.

Cristina's political career has not been unscripted neither has been product of her husband influences. She had been representative and senator on various occasions. Just like her husband, she has been a militant of the left peronism inside the PJ; she has been militant in the fight on behalf of the human rights and she has sought the clarification of thousands of disappearances during the time of the State. As presidential candidate, she had a very clear result upon obtaining victory with a big percentage majority and she did not need to go to a second round; participation of the voters was at 71,81%.

Certainly, the triumph of the right-wing Mauricio Macri in the city of Buenos Aires, through Propuesta Republicana (PRO) on July 2007 could cause to think that the Cristina victory was going to be difficult on October, but it was not; she won the presidency; under her, the candidate Elisa Carrio was placed in second representing a more radical left.

[128] Platform of the coalition Frente para la Victoria is available at http://www.frenteparalavictoria.org/plataforma.php

**Presidential Elections**:
**October 28, 2007**

| PARTY | CANDIDATES | VOTES | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Frente para la Victoria | Cristina Fernández de Kirchner | 8.204.624 | 44,92 |
| Confederación Coalición Cívica | Elisa M. A. Carrio | 4.191.361 | 22,95 |
| Alianza Concertación UNA | Roberto Lavagna | 3.083.577 | 16,68 |
| Alianza Frente Justicia, Unión y Libertad | Alberto J. Rodríguez Saa | 1.408.736 | 7,71 |
| Partido Socialista Auténtico | Fernando "Pino" Solanas | 292.933 | 1,60 |
| Movimiento Provincias Unidas Unión Popular, Movimiento Acción Vcina MODIN | Jorge Omar Sobish | 284.161 | 1,56 |
| Recrear para el Crecimiento | Ricardo López Murphy | 264.746 | 1,45 |
| Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores | Vilma Ripoli | 138.601 | 0,76 |
| Partido Obrero | Néstor A. Pitrola | 113.004 | 0,62 |
| Alianza Frente PTS-MAS Izquierda Socialista | Jose A. Montes | 94.777 | 0,52 |
| Alianza Frente Amplio hacia la Unidad | Luis Alberto Ammann | 75.692 | 0,41 |
| Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados | Raúl Aníbal Castells | 54.893 | 0,30 |
| Partido Popular de Reconstrucción | Gustavo Breide Obeid | 45.113 | 0,25 |

*Source: Official data from the Dirección Nacional Electoral (DNE)*
*www.mininterior.gov.ar/elecciones/estadisticas/e_07r.asp*
*www.resultados2007.gov.ar*

In the 2003 elections a phenomenon had been given that would also be constant in the 2007 process. The traditional parties were not presented to elections as themselves alone but they presented candidates that had formed alliances or fronts. During the decade 1980 and 1990, the Argentina elections were disputed between the Partido Justicialista (Peronista) and the Unión Cívica Radical. We can see then a bipartisanship, but this no longer existed. The party system in Argentina is found in an evolution process in which different forces and ideologies find a space to contend and to be able to assume power, whether inside the same party (as it was the case of confrontation between the peronists Menem vs Kirchner in 2003) or also out of it in an independent way or in coalitions. No longer is the confrontation PJ vs UCR what defines the electoral combat; the 2003 clash was among peronists of different ideological positions; Cristina herself chose Julio Cobos as candidate for Vice President, who was governor of Mendoza and member of the UCR. The 2007 electoral confrontation, in fact, was between two women. Elisa Carrio who had abandoned the UCR membership in order to seek power in an independent way; she had sought the presidency in 2003 and, through the *Coalicion Civica*, the organization that postulated her, she carried out and consolidated a more extensive work, remaining in the second place in the 2007 electoral results; she has intended to be an opposition against the peronist governments and against those of the UCR; she had fought Carlos Menem, Fernando de la Rua, Duhalde and Néstor Kirchner.

On October 28, 2007, there were 14 presidential candidates; also a part of the legislative power was renewed. Cristina had a vote intention in the surveys between 39 and 47% of the voting, while Elisa Carrio was the next following the preferences, with only between 14 and 18% vote intention. One must keep in mind that the Argentine legislation indicates that the candidate who got in the first round the 45% of the votes, obtains directly the presidency; but also it exists in the legislation a clause that indicates that if a candidate sum between the 40 and 45% of the voting with a difference of more than 10 percentage points of difference with the following candidate, there won't be neither the need of the second electoral round.

Keeping in mind the terrible past of the military dictatorships of the Latin-American nations and the failure of the neoliberal model, and with the lack of positive alternatives in the armed movements against governments, the possibility of credible electoral processes has taken many people in the continent to seek in the party system some alternate options to the free market and different from the pro-government models. A decade before

there seemed not to be another way for the countries other than the neoliberal prescriptions through the structural adjustments; nevertheless, the campaign speeches of Lula da Silva, Evo Morales, Rafaél Correa, Daniel Ortega,… they got the triumph in the ballot boxes. Afterwards, It will be able to analyse historically if these new governments really have established new economic policies and social alternatives, but in the electoral context of many countries, there is no doubt that the people has voted for them. This can be affirmed even in those candidates that did not win, by many reasons, the presidency in their countries as Andrés Manuel López Obrador in México, Othón Solis in Costa Rica, Ollanta Humala in Perú, during 2006, in whose cases the gale of votes received by an enthusiastic population can be shown empiricaly.

With Nestor Kirchner in Argentina in 2003, the country also began a project that was joined with other forces of the new left of the subcontinent in search of a development through a "diversified economy with social inclusion",[129] and that emphasized the regional integration through alternatives different from those of the Alliance of the Free Commerce of the Americas (the ALCA). Quoting The Economist (11/14/06), the project of Kirchner can be catalogued inside the left ideology and thus the Jorge Castañeda (2008) book testifies it: "for many foreign and local observers, Kirchner has been considered as a left president due to his economic politics" (Tussie and Heidrich, in Catañeda and Morales, 2008); his governmental administration offered large results in little time and flowed into in the period of his wife, Cristina, who intends to be a government in which "the news of change will be to continue in the same direction".[130]

Cristina is the first woman President in Argentina. In the Latin American context, she is preceded by Michelle Bachelet (chosen in 2006) in the neighboring country Chile, by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990-1996) and by Mireya Moscoso in Panamá (1999-2004), in the new and ascending tendency of women participation in politics. Nevertheless, being man or woman does not determine any political tendency because we can find Violeta Barrios and Mireya Moscoso belonging to a right ideology while Bachelet and Cristina Fernandez are maintained in progressive projects linked in general with the left.

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[129] So much this quoting as others later are taken from the Cristina Kirchner speech when she took her post as president; the text is in the Argentina government official page.

[130] http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_6907000/6907675.stm

As a woman in Argentine politics, without having been president, we find in the 20th century the polemic Eva Peron, that transcended even to the imaginary Latin American; also another fact is found in María Estela Martínez de Perón "Isabelita" (1974-76), who held the Argentine Presidency after the the death of her husband Juan Domingo Perón. But the situation of the current president of Argentina is very specific because she did not burst in the political life of the country because of her housband personality and activities; she had a path and own political career, which in some years made her best-known in the national context more than her husband who was mayor or governor in one of the provincec. She had married in 1975 and they lived in Rio Gallegos, capital of Santa Cruz province, where they worked in the political legal environment and real estate business. But Nestor remained many years in the regional environment while Cristina, having been provincial representative in Santa Cruz in 1989, assumed then the position of national senator in 1995. She was then national representative and was again senator in 2001; from this post, she went to the presidential candidacy.

When Cristina Fernández took possession of the executive power, on December 10, 2007, in her first presidential speech, she delineated the main features of her government.

In the first place, she was presented like a continuation of the Nestor Kirchner project, which had begun in 2003. "You were able —she told this to the outgoing president—, with all the Argentinians, to revert that frustration, failure and disempowerment sensation that millions of Argentinians felt in those days. You did it in the name of a political project". This project is not made from a single individual but it is a community creation where the state has the responsibility to intervene, especially where the international financial agencies think they have the power to intervene and determine the course of the nation. This perspective was born with the Kirchner project in 2003 after the national 2001 crisis and carried inside a new concept of politics as a citizenship instrument: Néstor was who "converted again the politics as the valid instrument to improve the quality of life of the citizens and to move from an uncertain destiny, that seemed almost damned in a few moments".

From that perspective, the new president reiterates in many occasions that the new project worries about "to relocate the politics" as a collective action. There are no economic determinisms but the social subjects can change and modify their development models in spite of the pressures of a

wild globalization: "Using politics for the first time, the Republic of Argentina began to govern itself without fiscal deficit. Using politics, the country began, for the first time, to be out from indebtedness. Using politics, we decided to cancel our debts with the International Monetary Fund".

This last was very important in the popular imaginary because the new political project began with "the fear of not paying", in spite of the external and internal pressures. According to some analysts, the challenge of the Kirchner government made to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) —to whom the Argentinians blame for the economic 2001 fiasco—, claimed by Cristina Fernandez regarding the national interests, was one of the fundamental elements in the presidential campaign. "Jocelyn Olcott, a professor of Latin American history at Duke University, called the vote *the soundest rejection of the neoliberal project…. It's an endorsement of continuing with Kirchner's program, which was an emphasis on social programs over… the IMF project*". (LADB, *NotiSur* Nov 2, 2007)

But politics lives also in the institutions. Because of it, watching the time when the Argentina economic and political breaking happened after the transition from militarism to civil governments, it was necessary "to reconstruct institutionalism", consolidate the constitutional democratic system, especially the Judicial Power and its way of doing justice. In this context, the president recalled again the correct annulment of the laws about *Obediencia Debida, Punto Final e Indultos:* the parliament, the Supreme Court of Justice and the Courts should "adopt and design the instruments that, guaranteeing all the rights and guarantees that other Argentines did not have, could allow finally to indict and punish those responsible for the big genocide of our history". This is a clear demarcation set against the positions of the Menem and radicals governments.

The insistence in a new way to make politics was not only a task for the new government but also for the society in general because it is necessary to keep always in mind the link between state and citizenship. "In order to make changes in a country, it is necessary to have a good government and a good society, where each citizen knows that every day life decisions means also building the society model in which they want to live".

But, are we talking about the construction of a new social and economic model for Argentina? There is something new in the proposal of President Fernández, but the project is not identified with the Hugo Chávez language about the new socialism. In this sense, the new Argentine government does not have the Chávez ideological radical nature but surely Cristina is pro-

posing some radical reforms different from the neoliberal model. Cristina proposes a "new diversified economic model: accumulation with social inclusion; the key for the times to come has been placed in motion; it is a model that recognizes in the work, in the production, in the industry, in the export, in the agrarian field, the driving force that has permitted that millions of Argentines recover again not only the work but also the hopes and illusions on a possible better life". This emphasis in the role of the State in order to drive the economy, encouraging production with social inclusion in the internal market is what breaks clearly with the Menem imposed model in the decade of the 90's. There is no doubt that we must put a great attention in production, productivity, competitiveness, science and technology, nevertheless she affirms with clarity: "I have not come to be a President of the Republic to become guardian of the businessmen profit value; they must forget this. I have neither come to be a President in order to become part of some internal union or political fight".

In this project for the country that the president imagines for Argentina, along with economy and politics, also the education will have a lot to do and, because of it, she conceived it as one of her government priorities. She recognizes private education but gives a great emphasis to public education as priority State task, not only in its quantity wanting to get to all the people but especially in its quality: she proposed the creation of "a State that has determined to place to education as the other fundamental axis of transformation adding competitiveness".

Almost at the end of her speach, the new president took up again another topic that already have been prioritized by the former Kirchner government; he thanked the Latin-American presidents coming personally to accompany her (Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Uruguay) and said she wanted to take up again the integration framework of Latin America, especially the project of "MERCOSUR, our space, in which we expect that Venezuela could be incorporated in a short time". She also spoke there about the differences with Uruguay in the troubled case of the border enterprises but at the same time with the desire to resolve these problems the legal way of the International Court of the Hague.

She spoke about the international framework with her proposal about "the reconstruction of the multilateralism", criticizing the militaristic role of the United States after the 2001 terrorist attacks: "An unilateral world is more unjust, a more insecure world… The fight in which we are compromised against terrorism should neither carry us to justify, by fear to the

global terrorism, that we incur in the global violation of the human rights". And she did not lose the opportunity to declare "our unavoidable and indeclinable claim for the sovereignty on our *Malvinas* islands"; she denounced England as a country occupying a territory that historically has been Argentine, transforming it as a colonial enclave.

## Final Considerations

In Argentina, through the 2007 electoral process, the continuity of a political project has been maintained: a current of Peronism has broken ideologically with the Menem neoliberalism; this had happened since 2003, and it showed a great economic recovery and a social politics tending clearly to a better distribution of the social wealth and now under the personality of the first woman president in its history. Two factors occurred: the Nestor Kirchner good government management (2003-2007) and the Cristina's good personality and proposals as candidate; they favored a clearly positive electoral result for the Frente para la Victoria (44% above on the 22% of the next following candidate Elisa Carrio); there was no need to go to a second round.

The democratic transition in Argentina has not taken the process to civil governments to the governmental power using elections but also it has awoken emerging leaders with post-neoliberalism proposals. It can be seen clearly that the facts have contradicted the M. Tatcher famous saying when she shouted 25 years ago in England: *there is not alternative*.

In Latin America we are witnessing the rise of new alternatives to neoliberalism. Though there are more radical proposals as those of Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Evo Morales (Bolivia) and Rafaél Correa (Ecuador), also one must recognize governments such as that of Argentina (Fernández), Brazil (Lula), Chile (Bachelet),… that represent new proposals against the drastic programs of imposed adjustment by the IMF and other international agencies; their new proposals of social politics have arisen with the majority of the support from the population in their respective countries.

# Conclusions

*"Our main enemy is not the imperialism, neither the bourgeoisie, neither the bureaucracy. Our main enemy is the fear and we carry it inside"*
(Domitila Barrios)[131]

For several decades, the Latin America social image has been that of an underdeveloped region governed by many dictatorships. This imaginary has not been only an object of social analysis but it has also been expressed in the literature world, that is another form to grasp reality. Poverty and underdevelopment are a common image for many of the countries of the Third World, but this sub-continent has been known, especially in literature, as something emblematic in its authoritarian form to be governed. "In Latin America, that through the years has had to be a witness and victim of diverse dictatorships, the fascination for this topic has remained expressed in works that have tried to paint the unhealthy environment, the repression, the fear and the lethargy that seem to accompany all the dictatorships; thus the *Peron Novel* (La Novela de Perón) by Tomas Eloy Martínez, the Guatemalan dictatorship description on Estrada Cabrera obtained by Miguel Ángel Asturias in *El Señor Presidente*, or *Yo El Supremo*, by Roa Bastos, *El Recurso del Método*, of Alejo Carpentier… or the total delirium and the dictator solitude in García Marquez's *El Otoño del Patriarca*,… all of them are clear examples of the eternal bliss that seems to exercise those ones as omnipotent, megalomaniacal and merciless, that can be called Trujillo, Duvalier, Stroessner or Ubico" (Torres, 2001: 195-196). Even the case of México, that apparently did not have this

[131] Domitila Barrios is a Bolivian woman that along with other four women initiated a hunger strike in 1978 until the fall of the military dictatorship in this country. Her words are quoted from Eduardo Galeano upon receiving on July 3rd, 2008, the title of First Illustrious Citizen of the region by the MERCOSUR countries.

type of military dictatorships, has been portrayed in a historic work by Enrique Krauze in *La Presidencia Imperial* speaking about of the continuance in power of a single party in the 71 years government.

In Latin America, the military dictatorships seem to have been suffering a transition phase toward democratic governments and because of it, on the one hand, the rulers are now chosen through periodic elections and, on the other, the people in government are no longer used to be those omnipotent gentlemen that imposed their will on all people. But neither the elections are a finished phase neither the authoritarianism has disappeared at all. Still worse, upon initiating the new 21st century, the world has not experienced an improvement in the material welfare condition of many people. There remains still a big task so that the institutions could be consolidated in order to organize fair elections in each country and so that the results of final voting could be truly credible for most of the citizens. It remains still a lot to do so that the chosen rulers themselves could permit the civic participation in the government program. And the most important challenge still remains as a question: How to achieve social politics that have effective repercussions in the improvement of the living conditions of the people?

The Deepa Narayan study (2000) financed by the World Bank indicates us, in one of its main conclusions, that no government in these countries has achieved much on poverty and inequality until now, when we see significan progress in these levels. There could be many reasons to explain this failure: the economic interests of the big oligarchic groups with more weigh in most governments politics; the big corruption level in many government areas making destined resources to the social policy could arrive to the poor people only as several drops; the administrative inefficiency, duplicity of functions in many agencies of social politics; the small or null citizens organizing capacity in the planning, execution and evaluation of the social programs.

But behind all of these, there is an economic model under the rules of the last decades prevailing neoliberalism that has shown so much its incapacity to revive production as, above all, its great capacity to concentrate the wealth in few hands. But now no longer is there an unbeatable enemy, because the citizens are learning to defeat the fear of change. One of the main enemies to fight, as Domitila indicates it in the epigraph of these conclusions, is the fear that we all carry inside: we fear the imagination, fear the established powers, fear to think about a different world. But it is not about a natural fear; we are talking abut a fear instilled in the modern culture by the same actors that have been perpetuated in the power.

Robinson Salazar, the director of the *Insumisos Latinoamericanos* network in Mexico has initiated, for example, an investigation project to show how in Latin America some governmental and oligarchic sectors have mounted all a complex strategy for instill fear in the population in order to demobilize them and to inhibit their participation. It is an induced fear, created and promoted; in his proposal, he indicates that "it was required to sow fear in the places prone to the citizens organization, in order that the collective subject could be diluted, the acts could not be transformed in actions, the popular sectors could be separated and became not a social cement, the associative threads could break, the collective humans groups could have distrust among them watching themselves as potential aggressors with an anguish undermining them from inside and they could be fragmented without no clue about how to agglutinate efforts in order to change the imposed order". Defeating fear, then, becomes one of the main strategies for change.

But the fight is not found only in subjectivity, in the individuals' internal environment. In this study, we wanted to emphasize the great meaning the new electoral alternatives have in Latin America in one decade with the emerging left leaders through the democratic electoral fight; we have done it to indicate the importance of the civic participation in this level. And this has been shown when left different tendencies have accepted to participate in the rules of electoral democracy and, with it, they have obtained many signifying triumphs in national and local regions. In the successful experiences —and also when the electoral triumphs have not been achieved— there are many lessons to be learned. In the current Latin-American context, it is possible to affirm, as opposed to what happened several decades ago in the 20th century, the democratic voter turnout has an enormous significance in the life of societies, because the project for better social politics is defined in the programs of the political parties that could win the government in a specific time. If the left has managed to be triumphant in the established institutional frameworks, it means that there is the possibility to achieve social changes and radical reforms by the political way without a need to return to the armed confrontation.

Nevertheless, the problems of our underdevelopment and authoritarianism are so complex that we cannot think —knowing the great importance of the electoral way trying to consolidate the democratic institutions in each country— that the vote can be the only way of political fight. We can verify that no right or left government in power in a legitimate way, is able to fullfill all the campaign promises; in the next future, we will have time to analyze

the way in which they have governed the Latin-American presidents, especially those of the left, especially those whose triumphs are analyzed in the present book.

Along with the revitalization of the citizens' participation in the electoral processes as element of change, there also remains very clearly that the social imaginary arising in Latin America is not enclosed in the representative democracy of political parties. We want to revitalize politics as an instrument of change. There is a sector of the left feeling disappointed about all the political parties —they could be right or left, center right or center left—, because their action in the contemporary society is only devoted to the constant fight for power positions; there are no different projects among them but only men and women seeking profit on the institutional political posts; nevertheless, the political parties are necessary in the real world of the representative democracy and, with civic voters or abstentionism, the rulers are decided and elected according to the Constitution. In the search for change and for a true Latin-American development, it is not necessary to be militant in any political party but, yes, it is indispensable to participate actively in order to decide among the possible options presented to us. There are many possibilities of collective action. Inside or out of the parties but with citizen organization, it will be necessary to participate in a constant way to influence, supporting or being opposed, to politics determined by any government.

Never should we be out from politics; it is a civic responsibility remembering the Greeks and their permanent participation as citizens on the streets and in the main square or in the sense of politics as proffession in the Max Weber style, as a function of those people that have public responsibilities. In both cases, the politics belongs to the public arena, to the collective interests, to the civic responsibility to do something in order to solve the common problems of any society.

Politics cannot be analysed only from the Machiavellian perspective as a fight for power or power positions in a world of continuous intrigues and complots but also we must take the sense of Plato's idealism, or Aristotle's dialectic when he studied the Greek constitutions or also Cicero's passion in his intent to preserve the values of the Rome Republic. The dialectic between the real world of opposite interests from the many groups and the proposals of collective interests and the commitments for the citizenship construction will always exist. Thus, Sallust mentions, upon analyzing the Catilina conspiracy against the Roman Republic in the 1st century b.C.,

a democratic model that was also defended ardently by Cicero: "Since the beginnings of my adolescence I consecrated myself, as many others, with passion, to the public business, in which I should have encountered numerous obstacles, because instead of modesty, sobriety and disinterest, there was only boldness, profligacy and avarice" (Sallust, 1991: 3). In a similar way, in each real case, we are going to find a political situation with all its internal contradictions, but in it, always we will be able to aspire to make prevail the collective interest of the community. Maybe this is what the neoliberalism model did not do in the last decades and, for that, the left alternatives supported by the population have arised.

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